ENTERTAINMENT / A30

Jed Madela brings home 6 golds from H'wood performing arts tilt

Pinoy winner in Swiss filmfest 'couldn't believe it'

WORLD / A10

Crashed airplane may have become flying tomb

ACROSS / A18

Cavite politics reaches courts as gov sues vice gov for graft

Gov't agencies adopt energy-saving measures

By Luige A. del Puerto and Christine O. Avendano

AT THE logistics office in Camp Crame, Chief Supt. Ely de la Paz turns on the air-conditioning unit in his room only when a visitor walks in.

Two floors up, at the office of the chief of di-

GOV'T/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Tuesday, August 16, 2005 ★★ 44 pages / 2 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 249 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Asia marks end of war, but little fanfare in RP

By Margaux C. Ortiz

ASIA commemorated the 60th anniversary of Japan's World War II surrender yesterday by honoring the dead and searching for reconciliation, while the Japanese prime minister tried to salve wounds by apologizing for the great damage and pain his nation had inflict-

ASIA MARKS/ A20

Teves: Deferring VAT will hurt poor

Senators blast proposal as trial balloon

By Michelle V. Remo and Juliet Labog-Javellana

DEFERRING the implementation of the 10-percent value-added tax (VAT) amid surging international crude oil prices will just bring more pain to the people, Finance Secretary Margarito "Gary" Teves said yesterday.

"We need the VAT to achieve fiscal consolidation and avoid a budgetary crisis that will bring more hardships to our people, particularly the poor," Teves said.

The tax, which the Supreme Court froze on July 1, is seen as vital for reining in the government's budget deficit and, if the freeze stays in place, can put pressure on the peso, analysts said.

The peso weakened and share prices closed lower yesterday on concerns that the VAT would be deferred. *(See story in Business, Page B1.)*

Teves said his office would convince Malacañang not to give in to the proposal of Albay Rep. Jose Salceda, one of the economic advisers of President Macapagal-Arroyo, to put off implementation of the VAT law until crude prices dropped to $50 a barrel.

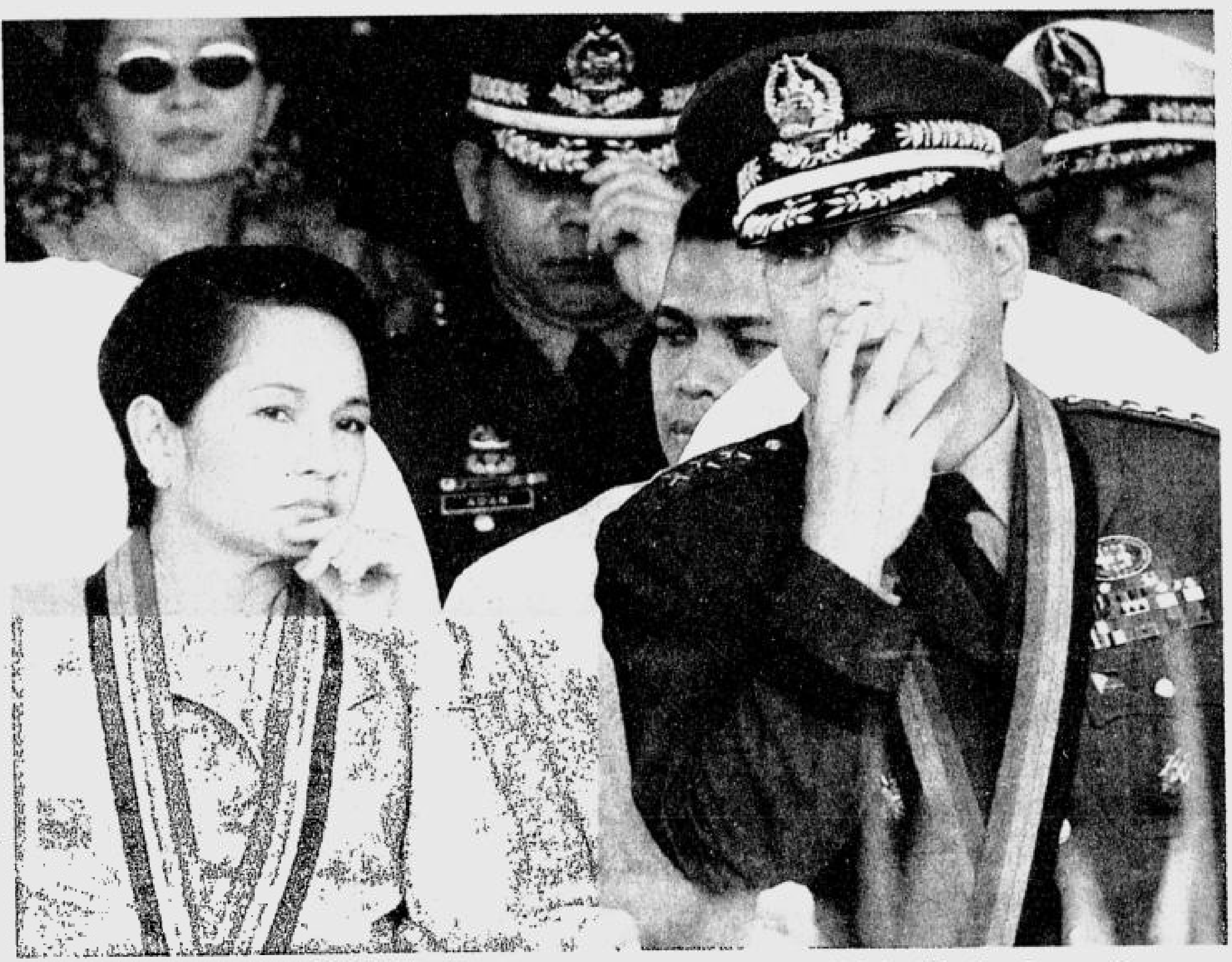
Salceda said implementing the VAT law after crude oil had hit a record $67 a barrel in New York on Friday would be "suicidal." Oil refiners in the country use Dubai crude whose price rose to a record $57.80 a barrel also on Friday to calculate their retail prices.

The President said the country must set aside petty politics because of the surging oil prices.

"Today, we face not only domestic controversies but also an oil crisis of global proportions ... For the rest of us in the civilian government, we are called upon to break our partisan bickering and focus our national energy on the oil and energy crisis," Ms Arroyo said in a speech at the ceremony marking the change of command in the military.

The Supreme Court is expected this month

TEVES/ A8



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo listens intently to her newly appointed Armed Forces chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga, during turnover rites at Camp Aguinaldo.

EDWIN BACASMAS

GMA orders AFP chief of staff: Insulate military from politics

By Christine O. Avendaño and Dona Pazzibugan

THE ORDERS from the commander in chief were issued in rapid succession: Keep the Armed Forces of the Philippines within the Constitution. Do not allow any partisan politics to undermine the chain of command. Go after terrorists.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's directives came shortly after Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga, the highly regarded Army commander, was sworn in yesterday as the eighth AFP chief of staff in her troubled 4-year-old presidency.

Underscoring the importance of the military in her political survival, Ms Arroyo declared that the nation would endure and survive any upheaval or crisis "for as long as the rule of law is enforced by the integrity of the uniform and the professionalism of good soldiers."

Senga, 55, who as a battalion and brigade commander led operations against communist and Moro rebels, urged soldiers not to get involved in politics, and to focus on their task of maintaining the peace.

He replaces Gen. Efren Abu, who has retired. Maj. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, head

GMA ORDERS/ A20

Senga also subject of complaint

By Fe Zamora

ABOUT a month before President Macapagal-Arroyo appointed Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, he was the subject of a complaint lodged in the Office of the Ombudsman, an INQUIRER source said yesterday.

The complaint was not related to the May 2004 elections, ac-

SENGA/ A20

GMA aide warns of economic meltdown

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PHILIPPINES may soon suffer an economic meltdown like Argentina did a few years ago if President Macapagal-Arroyo insists on burdening the public with more taxes on their fuel and power purchases amid spiraling crude oil prices, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda warned yesterday.

"The biggest mistake of Argentina in 2000 was to impose new taxes during an external shock when the domestic economy was weakening just like in the Philippines," said Salceda in an interview a day after proposing the deferment of the value-added tax on oil and power should the Supreme Court vote to allow its implementation starting next month.

Argentina defaulted on $88 billion in debt (the largest default by a country in history) in December 2001 amid financial panic and bloody rioting after two years of a deep recession.

If the South American country's downfall was precipitated by an external factor (the Asian financial crisis), the Philippines has surging oil prices as the potential trigger for an economic meltdown, said Salceda, one of the economic advisers of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The key here is the initial state of the economy. There are signs of a slowdown and accumulated price pressures such as under-recoveries (the failure of oil companies to recoup losses from oil price increases) and manufacturing firms forced to absorb rising costs. We don't want to prick those pent-up impulses," Salceda said.

Oil price increases in the first half have this year already pushed the inflation rate (the barometer of price movements of goods and services) to 8.4 percent.

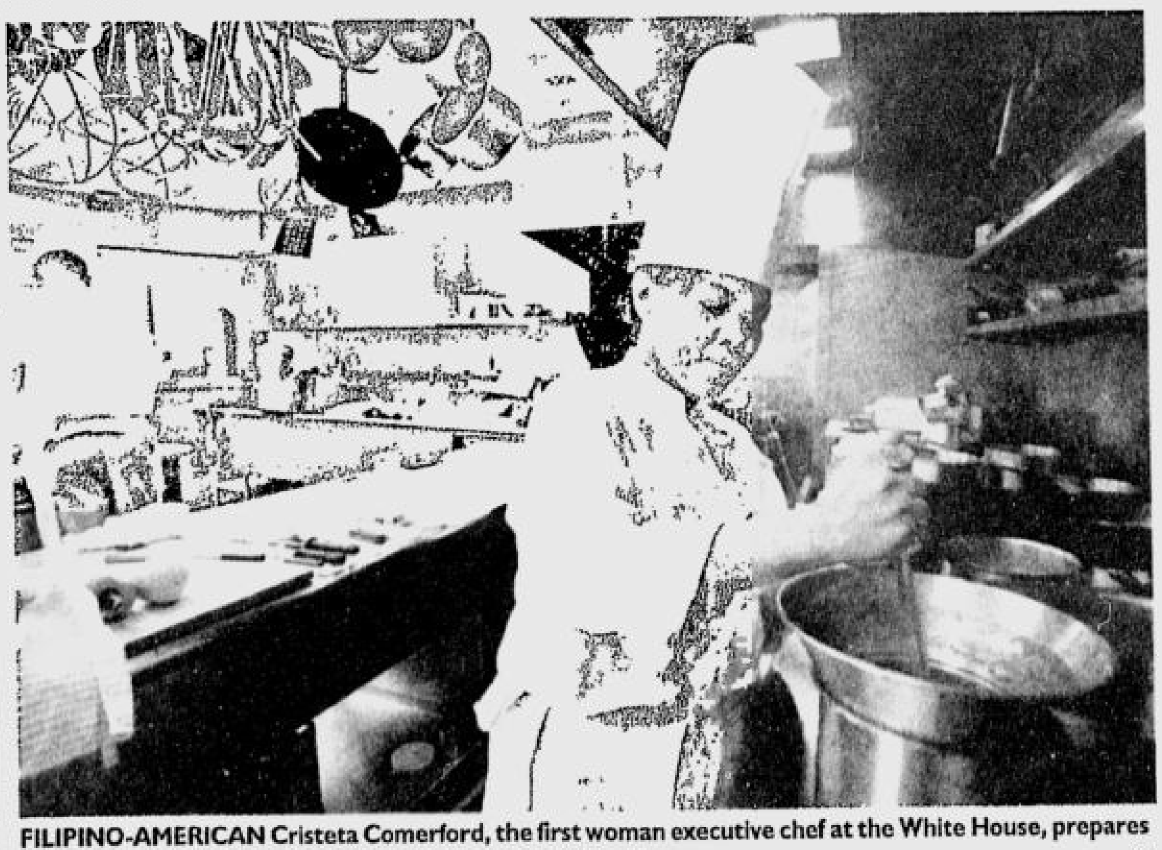
"Imposing the VAT now with oil hovering at $67 per barrel is

GMA/ A8

Peso drops on oil, VAT concerns

Fresh fiscal woes halt T-bill rate slide

BUSINESS / B1



FILIPINO-AMERICAN Cristeta Comerford, the first woman executive chef at the White House, prepares a meal in this July 17, 2002, photo provided by the White House.

AP

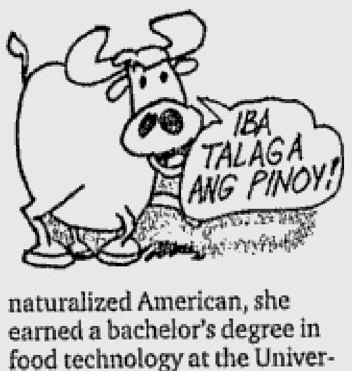
UP food tech grad appointed White House executive chef

CRAWFORD, Texas—Filipino-American Cristeta Comerford on Sunday became the first female executive chef at the White House, six months after US First Lady Laura Bush reportedly forced out the last organizer of the president's state dinners.

In a statement, the First Lady said she was delighted that Comerford, who had been an assistant chef in the White House since the mid-1990s, had accepted the top job at the executive kitchen.

"Her passion for cooking can be tasted in every bite of her delicious creations," she said of Comerford.

Comerford, 41, immediately left on vacation and was unavailable for comment. Now a naturalized American, she earned a bachelor's degree in food technology at the University of the Philippines and then gained experience serving as a chef tournant at Le Ciel restaurant in Vienna.



IBA TALAGA ANG PINOY!

She has experience working with chefs in San Francisco and the California wine country, and had stints at the top Washington hotels—the Grand Bistrot and La Colonnade.

Comerford had been one of two assistants of White House chef Walter Scheib in the executive kitchen since 1995. Her specialty is "ethnic and American cuisine," according to a White House statement. Comerford has also been trained in French classical techniques.

The key post in the White House kitchen has been vacant since March when Scheib left after 11 years as executive chef. According to the US media, Scheib could not adapt to the culinary demands of the First Lady.

Comerford's appointment was announced after The New York Times printed an article on Sunday telling how Laura

UP FOOD TECH/ A8

Second FrontPage

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northwestern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. Bicol region and Eastern Visayas will be partly cloudy to cloudy with rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening COMPILED BY: ERIKA A. SARMIENTO, PDI RESEARCH/08/16/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Row brewing over Dy deposition

By Michael Lim Ubac and Juliet Labog-Javellana

FORMER Isabela Gov. Faustino Dy Jr. has given a deposition in the United States on what he knows about the alleged bribery of election officials by President Macapagal-Arroyo, two opposition stalwarts virtually confirmed yesterday.

But Philippine consular officials in Los Angeles refused to authenticate the deposition allegedly on orders of the President, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday.

"I understand Governor Dy already made a deposition but it could not be authenticated because I was told – this is just raw information I'm sharing with you – that the embassy people were told not to authenticate any document that might compromise – quote unquote – national security," Pimentel said.

"The order, ostensibly from Gloria, is general," he added.

At a press conference at the House of Representatives yesterday, Minority Leader Francis Escudero said Dy had agreed to take the witness stand if summoned by the Senate in an impeachment trial of Ms Arroyo.

"The commitment he gave to me was his willingness to testify once the impeachment complaint is filed with the Senate," Escudero, who met with Dy in the US last week, said.

Asked if Dy had executed a deposition which was now in the hands of the opposition, Escudero simply winked.

On the reports Malacañang had ordered the Philippine consulates in Los Angeles and New York not to authenticate Dy's deposition, he said: "*Wala naman* (Not really). But there is a supposed order barring any authentication that might have political ramifications without the consent of the ambassador and the secretary of foreign affairs." He did not elaborate.

Although Escudero did not want to preempt Dy's testimony, the Sorsogon lawmaker said it was "clear that he has first-hand knowledge of the La Vista meeting and other meetings related to the last elections."

Whether Dy would make damaging claims against the President, Escudero said, "Let's put it this way. If he wanted to say there was no such meeting, he should have done so yesterday, the other day, last week or last month. The mere fact that he's not saying it is perhaps the best evidence that his testimony, if at all, will present allegations against President Arroyo in the impeachment complaint."

Escudero said the House impeachment team might ask Dy to testify in the House committee on justice's impeachment hearings if necessary.

"We can always go back and knock at his door," he said.

The amended impeachment complaint filed against President Arroyo by 41 congressmen still needs 38 signatures to warrant transmittal to the Senate for trial.

INQUIRER sources put the number of collected signatures at 67, with the remaining signatures said to be coming from members of either the Liberal or Nacionalista parties.

Pimentel said he had information Dy's deposition corroborated the testimony of Michaelangelo Zuce, a former Malacañang functionary who testified in the Senate that he was present at the La Vista, Quezon City, home of the President when election officials were given money, ostensibly by Lilia Pineda, the wife of suspected "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda.

"What I know is that he validates the statement of Zuce and adds his own observations and other things," Pimentel said.

Told of Pimentel's statements, Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuque yesterday said he had "no idea" of the presidential order cited by the senator.

"I don't think it's possible," Asuque said, when asked if the President could order diplomats abroad to deny notarial services to Filipinos.

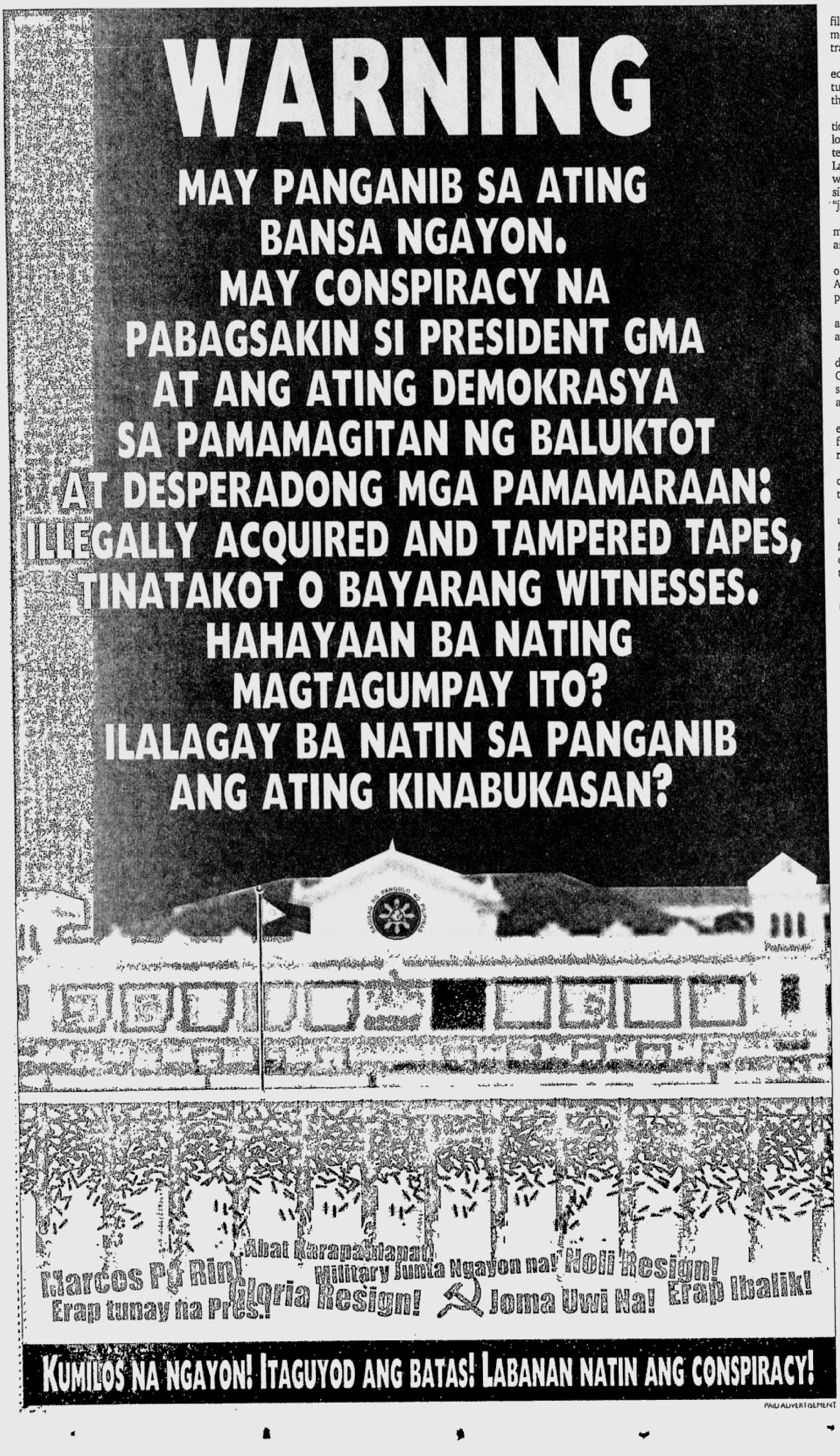
He said diplomats had an "obligation" under the Foreign Service Law and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations to notarize statements when approached by their nationals for the service.

But he clarified authentication only covered the fact the statement was signed in front of the consular official and not the veracity of its contents.

"We acknowledge the statement was executed but it's not our duty to ascertain the truth," he said.

Authentication allows a document to be used in court.

Asuque tried to contact Philippine consular officials in California but failed apparently because of the late hour and the fact that it was Sunday in the US West Coast. *With Volt Contreras*



WARNING

MAY PANGANIB SA ATING BANSA NGAYON. MAY CONSPIRACY NA PABAGSAKIN SI PRESIDENT GMA AT ANG ATING DEMOKRASYA SA PAMAMAGITAN NG BALUKTOT AT DESPERADONG MGA PAMAMARAAN: ILLEGALLY ACQUIRED AND TAMPERED TAPES, TINATAKOT O BAYARANG WITNESSES. HAHAYAAN BA NATING MAGTAGUMPAY ITO? ILALAGAY BA NATIN SA PANGANIB ANG ATING KINABUKASAN?

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Erap tunay na Pres.!
Gloria Resign!
Military Junta Ngayon na!
Joma Uwi Na!
Noli Resign!
Erap Ibalik!

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Osmeña bares Garci bribe list

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

CONTROVERSIAL Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano himself wrote down the amounts of money that were paid to election officials to rig the results of the 2004 election, according to opposition Sen. Sergio Osmeña III.

Osmeña said this was contained in Garcillano's handwritten notes which Michaelangelo Zuce, former assistant of presidential political liaison officer Jose Ma. Rufino, submitted to the Senate committees conducting the jueteng inquiry.

Zuce has testified he was present in the La Vista residence of President Macapagal-Arroyo when election regional directors and provincial supervisors were given money by Lilia Pineda, wife of suspected gambling lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda.

Osmeña said that during the latter part of last week's jueteng hearing, Zuce "authenticated" a document handwritten by Garcillano showing how the money was distributed among the Comelec officials. He said the one-page document was almost hidden among the documents Zuce submitted.

Zuce confirmed that Garcillano scribbled the names of Comelec officials from Basilan, Maguindanao, Sulu, Lanao del Sur and Tawi-Tawi who received amounts ranging from P10,000 to P40,000, Osmeña said.

He said that according to Zuce, Garcillano made the list during a consultation meeting at the Grand Boulevard Hotel on Jan. 10, 2004, before Garcillano and Zuce brought the officials to dinner with Ms Arroyo in her private residence.

Osmeña said the list revealed that as much as P550,000 in cash changed hands in just one meeting.

Copies of Garci's list were given to Senate reporters.

Osmeña admitted that Garcillano's handwriting had yet to be authenticated.

But he said this showed that testimonial evidence about the payoffs of election officials from jueteng money was growing.

"The details of the election fraud are steadily unfolding, perhaps to the dismay of the spin doctors making vague or evasive denials," Osmeña said.

Cam claims receiving bribe offers

By Norman Bordadora

JUETENG whistle-blower Sandra Cam said she had on tape three government emissaries allegedly offering Cam to name her price in exchange for her silence and quiet departure from the country.

"I have them all on tape," Cam told the INQUIRER referring to the meetings she had with the government's purported messengers.

"My lawyer's [staff] are already transcribing [the details of our conversations]," she added, hinting that those who made the offer might soon find themselves listening to their respective voices on radio and TV.

Cam said those who met with her to buy her silence included a former congressman turned businessman, a former governor and an incumbent government official. She said their identities would be revealed at the proper time and proper venue.

She, however, said that she still didn't know what legal action her lawyer Frank Chavez was planning against those who had tried to bribe her.

"The last meeting was with the former governor. I think that was on Friday," Cam said.

"[The group the former governor represented] claims to be non-partisan. But I don't know what their real intentions are [if the group was not involved in politics in anyway]," she added.

Cam said all three meetings transpired last week.

Dengue crisis far from over, says DOH

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE DENGUE crisis is far from over.

The deadly mosquito-borne disease has killed 189 of the 14,142 people infected from Jan. 1 to Aug. 11 this year, the Department of Health said yesterday.

The entire country has been placed under a dengue alert after more than 100 barangays were found to have "clusters" of three or more cases each in the last four weeks, Dr. Eric Tayag, DOH National Epidemiology Center chief, said.

The number of infections nationwide marked a 23-percent increase over the 11,525 cases recorded in the same period last year, Tayag said.

At the present rate, Tayag said the number of infections would likely breach the 20,000 cases health officials expect by the end of the rainy season two months from now.

"The rainy season is not over yet," Tayag said at a press conference. "We are anticipating that the rains of the previous two weeks will increase the number of cases in the next two to four weeks."

"Aedes aegypti," the mosquito that carries the dengue virus, usually attacks during the wet season between June and October. Collected rainwater is its chief breeding ground.

Despite the rising number of cases, Tayag said this could not be considered a national epidemic. An area is said to be experiencing an epidemic only when the number of cases breaches the ceiling set using data from the last five years, he said.

Metro Manila, for example, had an epidemic "threshold" of 219 cases for week 31 or the period from July 31 to Aug. 6. Since the area registered only 199 cases, an outbreak was not declared, Tayag said.

Local epidemics, however, were declared in Zamboanga City, General Tinio in Nueva Ecija and Sitio San Roque in Barangay Pag-Asa, Quezon City. The infections in these areas are under control, according to the DOH.

In Manila, infected areas were F. Varona Street, Vitas and Parola in Tondo, Anonas Street, Baseco Compound, and Quiricada Street in Sta. Cruz. Sunflower Street in Araneta Village, Tonsuya, Catmon, Potrero, Tugatog and Dagat-Dagatan were also infected in Malabon.

In Quezon City, 10 barangays were infected: Sto. Cristo in Balintawak, Sampaguita and Everlasting Streets in Payatas, Mother Ignacia, Kasayahan in Batasan Hills, Kaingin Road at UP Balara, ROTC Hunters in Tatalon, Bulacan at West Avenue, Banaba-Dulo in Greenfield, and UP Employees Village in Diliman.

The other provinces and cities that showed clusters were Pangasinan, Zambales, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Bataan, Sorsogon, Iloilo, Guimaras, Cebu City, Danao City, Mandaue City, Toledo City, Bukidnon, Camiguin, Misamis Oriental, Cagayan de Oro; Davao City, Cotobato City and North Cotobato.

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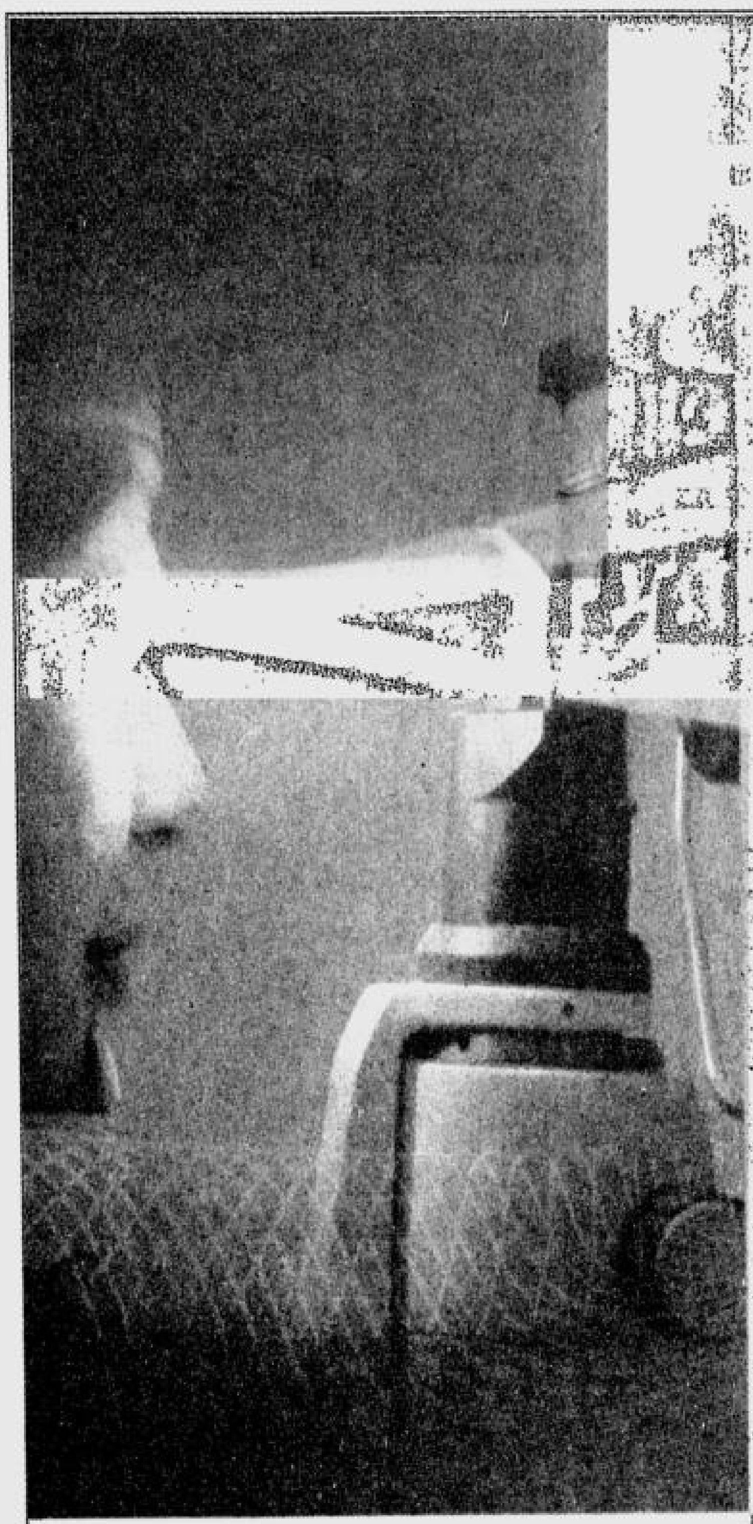

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China: 'Please keep *endless* politics out of NorthRail'

Let us not mislead the Filipino people

IN RECENT WEEKS, Senate President Franklin Drilon has been weaving a web of fiction to poison the minds of the Filipino people against President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. His fantastic claim: NorthRail's 32.2-km. project from Caloocan to Malolos is the most expensive rail project in the Philippines. He does not say it is a double-track, double line railway equivalent to 62.4 kilometers, the first in the Philippines.

In the interest of the truth, the North Luzon Railways Corp. (NorthRail) presents the true state of the project—separating fact from Sen. Drilon's politically-laced fiction.

Sen. Drilon's fiction: *The project is overpriced at P889 million per kilometer of track.*

Fact: The project cost is P360 million per kilometer of a two-track (double -line track) system—*not a single line but a double railway*—built over the old Philippine National Railways tracks, which will be completely replaced.

This TOTALLY NEW railway system includes the construction of six stations, a depot and maintenance yard, communication links, 21 Diesel Multiple Units (84 train cars), signaling system, grade separation at road crossings, retaining walls, eight major bridges, a viaduct section, and cost of additional rights of way. *Sen. Drilon's fiction omits these vital pieces of information.*

Fact: Compared with the actual costs of the country's recent rail works, NorthRail is shown to be the cheapest per kilometer of rail.

In Metro Manila, MRT-3's 33.8 kilometers cost $20.9 million per track-kilometer; LRT-4's 30.2 track-kilometers, $31.79 million; and LRT-1's 24-track-kilometer extension would cost more at $35.08 million per track-kilometer. NorthRail's 64.4 track-kilometers would run to only $6.54 million per kilometer, much cheaper.

Fact: This is a Bilateral Agreement between China and the Philippines, where the Chinese Government designated a 100 percent state-owned company to be the Prime Contractor for the project. This Prime Contractor is ranked No. 37 by the **Global Engineering News Record** of the 225 Largest International Contractors.

Fact: When completed, NorthRail from Caloocan to Malolos would be the cheapest mass-transport system in the country.

The basic fare would be P10 plus P1 for every kilometer thereafter—a total of P43 from end to end for the fast 37-minute ride (inclusive of dwell times at stations). The current bus fare is P75 for an hour's ride.

'I don't want to get into your endless political debates'

Fact: The project is being financed and built by the Chinese Government, with no Filipino contractor. Through the China Export-Import Bank, the Chinese Government extended a concessional credit facility of US$400 million (*not* US$500 million) at only 3 percent interest (*not* 7 percent) over 20 years (not ten years).

The Chinese Government describes this assistance as a "special loan for an important ally." China is known worldwide for its modern, efficient—and the world's cheapest—rail system serving the bulk of its 1.3 billion people.

Fact: China's credit facility covers 95 percent (not the standard 85 percent) of NorthRail's project cost. The Philippine Government would put up the remaining five percent as counterpart fund (US$21 million).

So exasperated was Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines, H. E. Wu Hungbo, by the political sham and deception being peddled by the opposition that he chastised them for dragging NorthRail and China needlessly into the political potboiler. He said: "This will not serve the best interest of the Filipino people. I don't want to get into your endless political debates . . . What I am wary of is that the endless debates on this contract may send a negative message to other Chinese investors and foreign investors as a whole."

He emphasized that the contract is "above-board—we have nothing to hide."

Sen. Drilon's overworked fiction branded the Chinese loan as onerous. This fictional tale—so poorly plotted—crumbles just as easily in the face of facts that can stand the toughest scrutiny. In fact the Chinese Embassy attaché, Peng Xiubin, described China's loan to the Philippines as a "preferential loan to an important ally." The figures prove this: 3 percent interest—the lowest rate—stretched over 20 years. *China's standard rate for loans is 7 percent over ten years.* Sen. Drilon's fictional tale ignores this core-value.

NorthRail endorsed at the highest levels of the Governments of China and the Philippines

China's two Presidents, two Prime Ministers, two Speakers of Parliament, and two Ambassadors of the People's Republic of China endorsed the project—China's first major under-taking of its kind in Southeast Asia.

On the Philippine Government side, those who approved and endorsed it were: Secretary Romulo Neri, then National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) director-general; the NEDA's Investment Coordinating Committee (ICC) headed by the Secretary of Finance; Foreign Secretary Delia Albert, and then Finance Secretary Jose Camacho and his successor, Juanita Amatong, and the NEDA Board chaired by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

China and the Philippines signed last April—during Chinese President Hu Jintao's state visit to the Philippines—the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Section 2 from Malolos to Clark in Pampanga. Then Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima signed for the Philippines and Yang Zilin, governor of the Export-Import Bank of China, signed for the People's Republic of China. Those who witnessed were Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo and Transportation and Communications Secretary Larry Mendoza.

Yang Zilin, (left), governor of the Export-Import Bank of China, and then Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, (right), sign the Memorandum of Understanding between China and the Philippines for Section 2 of the NorthRail Project. Chinese President Hu Jintao and Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo witness the signing in Manila last April.

So encompassing are the project's potential benefits that political leaders of the provinces through which the line will pass have all expressed their appreciation of the railway modernization program—more than 30 years after the PNR tracks north of Manila were abandoned.

The Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) and the governors, city mayors and municipal mayors of the Central Luzon provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga and Tarlac and the Northern Luzon provinces of Pangasinan and La Union have hailed the project's vast potential to create thousands of rural jobs, and raise rural incomes to generate collateral industries in their localities.

What the Project offers is a fast, reliable and cheap transport service that will bring about development, create jobs and decongest Metro Manila—both in population and in vehicular traffic.

People are tired of negative politics

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Erap plunder raps 'hard to believe'– Reuter

By Nelson F. Flores

CATHOLIC media expert Fr. James Reuter SJ yesterday said the plunder charges against former President Joseph Estrada were "hard to believe."

Reuter made the comment outside the courtroom following his testimony at the Sandiganbayan on the generosity to the poor of the former President.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said the proceedings showed Estrada's lawyers had abandoned his legal defense and were now relying on the testimonies of prominent people like Reuter. He said the Jesuit priest's testimony was irrelevant to the charges against Estrada.

Reuter told the court how at one time the former President gave him P1.5 million in government assistance and pledged the same amount every month to help maintain the Our Lady of Peace Hospital in Parañaque City. He added that President Macapagal-Arroyo has continued to honor Estrada's pledge.

Reuter said that when fire gutted an orphanage in Paco, Manila, he learned that Estrada had shelled out his own money to reconstruct the facility.

Reuter, 89, also told the court how the former President had sought his help in arranging a meeting with the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, after Estrada had been ousted from power, in a bid at reconciliation.

He said Sin, a fierce critic of Estrada, refused to meet with the deposed President but told Reuter that he [Sin] had already forgiven Estrada for whatever wrong he may have committed.

"Cardinal Sin felt it prudent not to meet with Erap because of the media," Reuter said.

Estrada was ousted in 2001 and has been charged with plunder and perjury in the Sandiganbayan. He has been in detention since 2001.

"It is hard to believe the charges against a person with such a human quality and love for the poor," said Reuter, whose presence in the courtroom brought smiles and laughter to the otherwise drab legal proceedings.

An American, Reuter has lived in the Philippines for 67 years and was made an honorary Filipino citizen by the Senate in 1996. He heads the National Office of the Mass Media of the Catholic Church in the Philippines. Aside from his involvement in Catholic media, he is known for his charitable work.

Estrada counsel former Senator Rene Saguisag said the defense presented Reuter to show the good qualities of the former President and to counter the trial by publicity against him.

Corrections

IN THE AUG. 12 issue, a front-page story—"Chatroom on sexuality wins award"—misstated the name of the website's concept developer. The correct name of the website's concept developer is Dr. Celia—not Cecilia—Flor Brillantes.

* * *

IN THE AUG. 14 issue, an obituary on Page A4—"Fr. Ceresko, Bible scholar; 62"—misstated the status of Dasmariñas, Cavite. Dasmariñas is a town—not a city.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, August 16, 2005
20th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Jdg 6:11-24
Gospel: Matthew 19:23-30

Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I say to you: it will be hard for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Yes, believe me: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the one who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven."

On hearing this the disciples were astonished and said, "Who, then, can be saved?" Jesus looked steadily at them and answered, "For humans it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

Then Peter spoke up and said, "You see we have given up everything to follow you: what will be our lot?"

Jesus answered, "You who have followed me, listen to my words: on the Day of Renewal, when the Son of Man sits on his throne in glory, you, too, will sit on twelve thrones to rule the twelve tribes of Israel. As for those who have left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or property for my Name's sake, they will receive a hundredfold and be given eternal life. Many who are now first will be last, and many who are now last will be first."

Commentary

Jesus seeks to teach his disciples the hard realities of the kingdom: how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom. Hard as a camel, stripped down, pulled through the eye of a needle. Impossible!—nothing is impossible with God. Grace and the Spirit can call even the rich, the middle class, and the poor alike to give what is their excess, and even what they need to those who need it more—the poor of the earth. He encourages them to live beyond the present, unto the end of time when there will be judgment. If they share in his way of the cross then they will share in his glory and even in this life they will know the graciousness of God in community, in shared hope, courage, dwelling places, friends who are the friends of God, the presence of support and life everlasting. How little we believe in the goodness of our God and what he hopes for us—even now, even here!

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Pampanga bishop on Pinedas: I don't see them anymore

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto said he would not turn away suspected "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda and his wife Lilia "Baby" Pineda if they asked him for counsel and advice.

"The House of God welcomes [everyone, even] people outside the flock," the 68-year-old prelate told the INQUIRER before he opened here on Sunday a philatelic and photo exhibit for late Pope John Paul II.

The Catholic Church, he said, "does not discriminate."

When informed that the Pinedas were hurting because church leaders in the province did not come to their defense, the archbishop said: "We're not even aware of that because we cannot read peoples' minds."

"I don't see them anymore," he said of the couple whom he earlier described as "good parishioners" and "very generous" in terms of donations to the church.

But while Aniceto was willing to give the Pinedas moral guidance, he reiterated his strong opposition to jueteng operations and its planned legalization.

In Pampanga, which Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. refers to as the "Vatican of jueteng," more than 200 priests have preached against the culture of gambling and have distributed primers against jueteng.

The primers carry Aniceto's appeal to jueteng operators, politicians and police officials to stop the illegal numbers game.

The practice of some priests to solicit jueteng money for charity projects or for the construction of churches has stopped since last year, according to Aniceto.

"We stand by that," said the archbishop who has shepherded the Archdiocese of San Fernando and its suffragan dioceses of Tarlac and Zambales in the last 16 years.

Aniceto did not say what advice he would give to the Pinedas but in his speech during the exhibit opening he said it was best to seek guidance from the teachings of Pope John Paul II—that truth, in the end, would help end divisiveness and confusion.

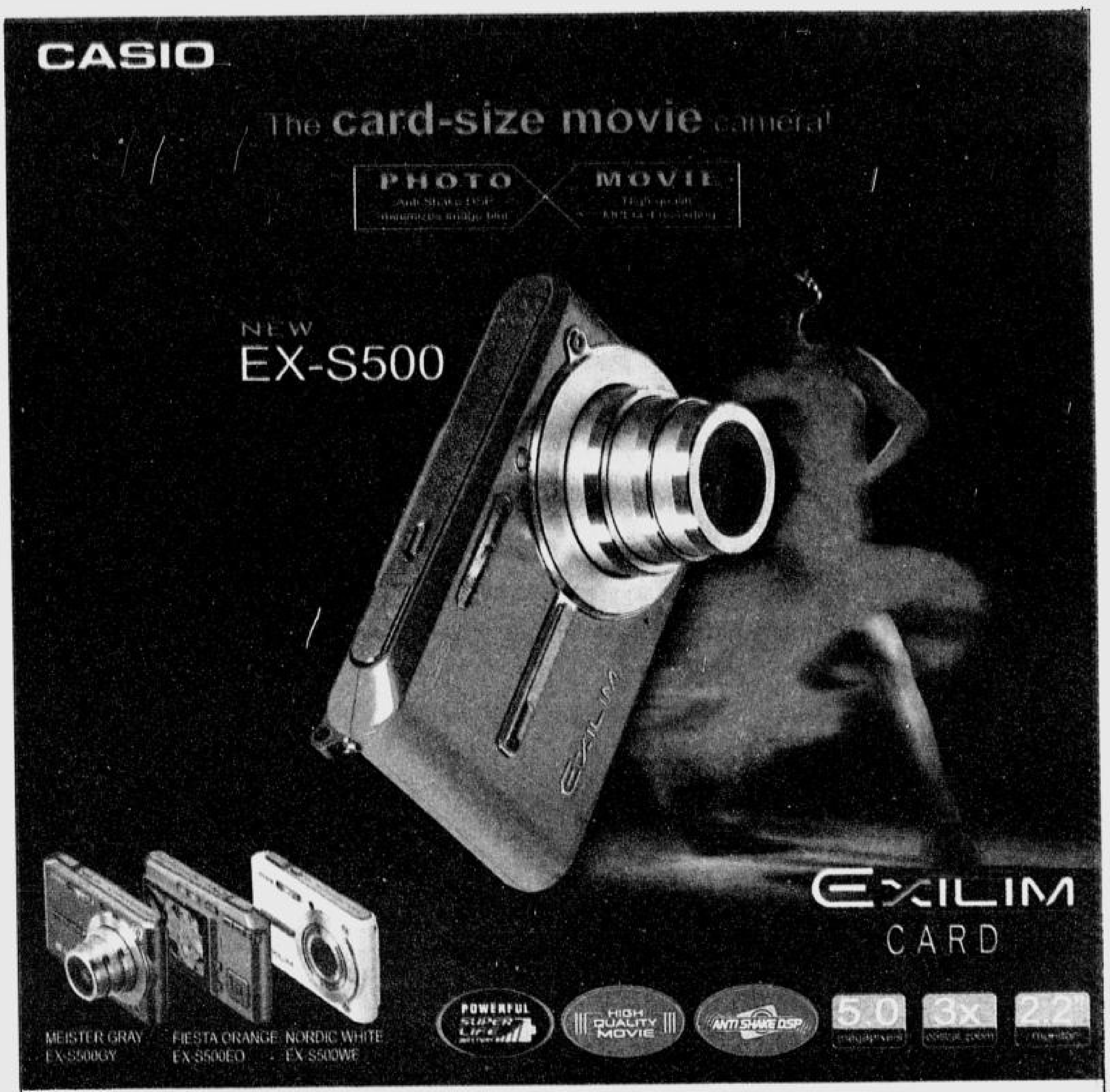
The Pinedas, who dropped out of the public eye since May, have become even more inaccessible after former Malacañang operative Michaelangelo Zuce surfaced early this month with his testimony.

Zuce told the Senate inquiry that Bong funded the supposed special operations of Zuce's uncle, former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, in Mindanao so that President Macapagal-Arroyo would win the May 10, 2004 elections.

Zuce, a witness of the opposition, also claimed it was Baby, a Pampanga provincial board member, who handed out bribe money to various regional election officials after a meeting in Ms Arroyo's home in La Vista, Quezon City, in January 2004.

Baby, through her lawyer, denied the allegations, while her husband, a native of Lubao, hometown of Ms Arroyo, had not issued any statement.

The President said no such incident took place in her La Vista home.



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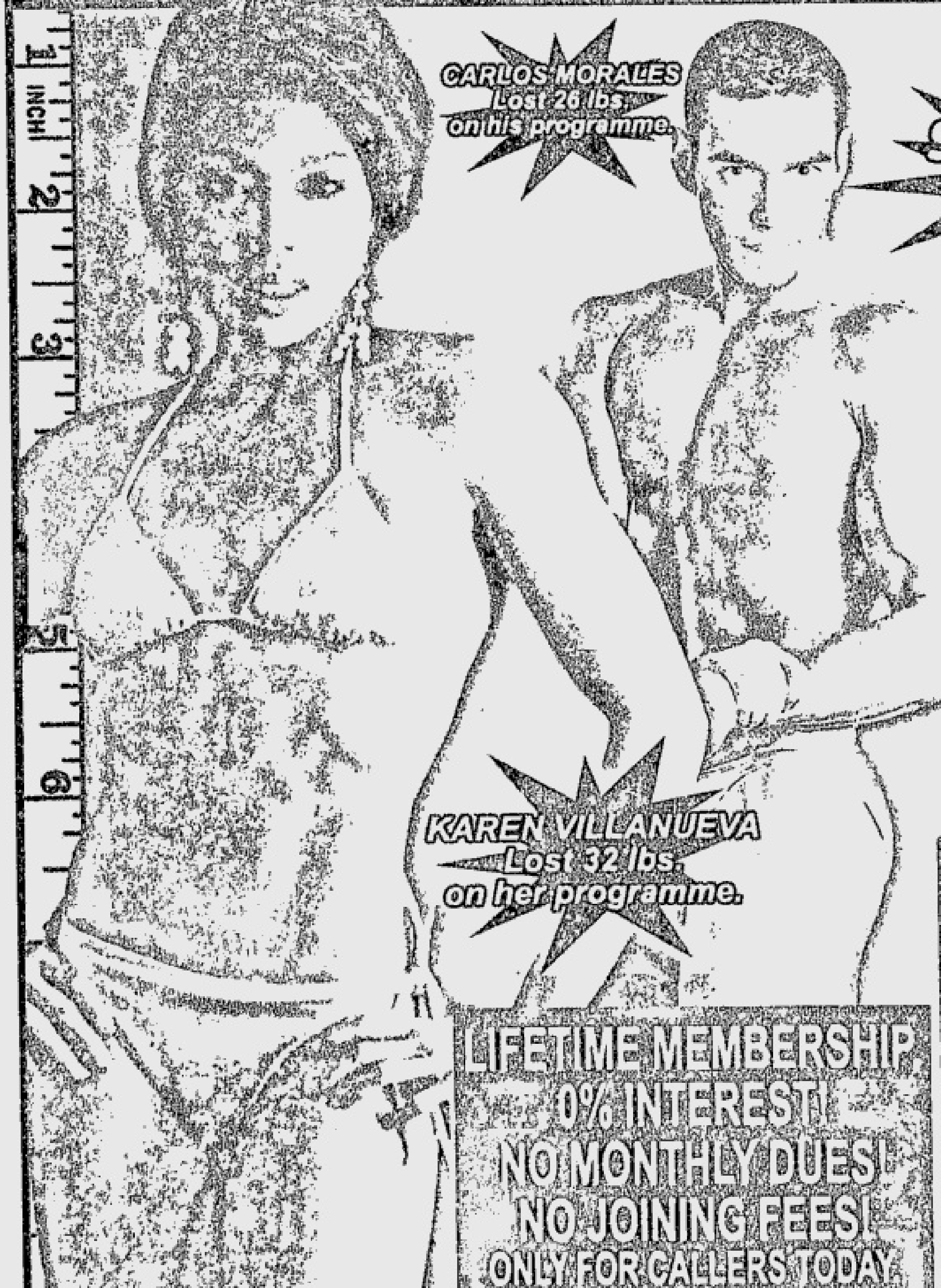
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CONCERNED FILIPINOS' DECALOGUE - AUGUST 2005

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- THAT OUR GOVERNMENT CAN COME UP WITH A CITIZENRY THAT IS DECENTLY FED, CLOTHED, SHELTERED, AND SCHOOLED;
- THAT MEDIA--- OBJECTIVE BUT INSPIRING, CRITICAL YET ENCOURAGING--- CAN BE CONSTRUCTIVE PARTNERS IN NATION-BUILDING, PROVIDING AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH FILIPINO TALENT WILL FLOURISH AND SERVE SOCIETY AT LARGE;
- THAT OUR PEOPLE, WITH THE ABOVE BASICS, CAN BECOME PRODUCTIVE, FULFILLED INDIVIDUALS, PROUD OF BEING FILIPINOS, CONTENT TO REMAIN IN THE LAND OF THEIR BIRTH;
- THAT PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO (PGMA) AS OUR DULY ELECTED PRESIDENT, WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT AND DUTY TO SERVE OUT HER TERM, CAN WITH GOD'S GRACE AND OUR HELP BRING ABOUT THE ABOVE SITUATION;
- THAT THE PRESENT UNSUBSTANTIATED CHARGES HURLED AGAINST PGMA WITH ILLEGALLY OBTAINED "EVIDENCE" PRESENTED BY PEOPLE OF QUESTIONABLE REPUTE ARE FLIMSY GROUNDS THAT CANNOT MERIT A DEMAND FOR HER RESIGNATION;
- THAT TO NEGATE THE DAMAGE DONE TO PGMA'S POSITION, THE ACCUSATIONS VS. PGMA UNDERGO A FAIR LEGAL PROCESS THAT CAN SERVE TO UNITE ALL FILIPINOS TOWARD NATIONHOOD;
- THAT THE PAINFUL POLITICAL SIEGE PGMA HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO CAN STRENGTHEN HER RESOLVE TO PURSUE REFORMS WITH GREATER DETERMINATION;
- THAT QUICK FIXES AND EXTRA-LEGAL POWER GRABS CAN NEVER OFFER ANY LASTING SOLUTIONS TO POLITICAL AND OTHER WOES;
- THAT WITH TIME AND SWEAT, TEARS AND PAIN, PATIENCE AND DETERMINATION, WE CAN WITH GOD'S HELP BRING ABOUT OUR REDEMPTION.

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Malaysia deploys fresh peace troops, extends mission

MALAYSIA has extended its peace monitoring mission in Mindanao, deploying yesterday a fresh batch of troops to monitor a truce between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The 13 monitors were welcomed by the outgoing commander of the Malaysian contingent, Maj. Gen. Zulkifli bin Mohd Zin, Rene Sarmiento, chief peace process adviser to President Macapagal-Arroyo and Brig. Gen. Ramon Santos, chair of the government's ceasefire committee.

More Malaysians are due to arrive in the next three weeks to replace the existing batch of 60 monitors deployed in areas in Mindanao controlled by the MILF.

The mission was supposed to end in October, but the MILF and Manila asked Malaysia to extend its presence to ensure that the truce is holding, Zulkifli said.

Sarmiento said the Philippines was hopeful of signing a peace agreement with the MILF either at the end of the year or early next year.

The next round of talks are scheduled to resume in Malaysia in the final quarter of the year.

"We are looking forward to the signing of the peace agreement at the end of the year or the first quarter of 2006. The arrival of a new batch of IMT (International Monitoring Team) sends a very strong signal that the Malaysian government has much trust in the ongoing peace process," Sarmiento told reporters.

Zulkifli said the truce was "holding very well," noting that there has been a "substantive reduction" of skirmishes between both sides since the Malaysian monitors arrived in October last year.

"I feel that the cooperation and commitment of both parties to the ceasefire has risen to a higher level of confidence and trust and transparency," he said. "I am very hopeful that things will further improve."

Santos noted that before the IMT's arrival last year, about 500 skirmishes between the military and the MILF had been recorded.

Another 58 incidents were recorded in the first few months after the arrival of the monitors, but they were found not to have been violations of the ceasefire terms of reference but "miscommunications and misunderstandings" between government and MILF troops, Santos added.

No incidents of violations have been reported for the last 120 days, he said.

The 12,000-strong MILF has been waging a separatist rebellion since 1978. It signed a truce with Manila in 2001 and subsequently denounced links with foreign militants, including the Jemaah Islamiyah, which has been linked to the terrorist al-Qaida organization.

It has consistently denied reports that JI militants were training in MILF camps in Mindanao.

Last week, the government said it was hunting 10 Indonesian JI militants believe to be plotting suicide bombings in the country. *AFP, with Nikko Dizon*

PCGG to sell Imelda's diamonds

By Alcuin Papa

THEY had been variously described as exquisite, even fabulous. After nearly two decades, the government is letting them go.

By year's end, the Presidential Commission on Good Government hopes to finally auction off pieces of jewelry owned by former First Lady Imelda Marcos.

PCGG spokesperson Nick Suarez said the agency expected to recover around $10 million from the sale.

The jewelry, now being held in escrow in a Central Bank vault, has been independently appraised and found to be genuine.

The PCGG is finalizing the conditions and details of the auction, including the venue and date of the auction, Suarez said.

"It is all being discussed at high levels. We hope to have the jewels disposed of before the year ends," he said.

Sotheby's auction house

There were no details on what sort of jewelry would be auctioned off but a 2002 report by the INQUIRER said the collection consisted of 89 pieces when they were inventoried and valuated by famed auction house Sotheby's in 1990.

At that time, the saleroom estimated value of the jewelry pieces was placed by Sotheby's at between a low of $4,194,920 and a high of $5,736,600.

The report had described the jewelry pieces as "works of art" by themselves because of their exquisite designs, breathtaking size, and the superb quality of the gems.

Bracelet worth $1.2m

It said the collection included a yellow gold 30.71-carat diamond-studded bracelet with a central marquise cut diamond crafted by Bulgari. When appraised by Sotheby's in 1990, it was reportedly valued conservatively at from $800,000 to $1.2 million.

According to the report, the collection included jewelry pieces seized in 1986 from Greek national Demetrious Roumeliotes, supposedly a close friend of Marcos. Roumeliotes denied they were owned by Marcos and claimed the pieces were made of paste.

Suarez said at least two international auction houses, whom he did not identify, had expressed interest in selling off the jewelry.

Who are the bidders?

A source in the PCGG said that the agency was determined to trace the backgrounds of bidders to prevent the jewelry from falling back into the hands of Marcos.

Now in her early 70s, Marcos faces several graft cases before local courts. The cases are linked to her stint as housing minister and governor of Metro Manila.

The 18-year-old PCGG has recovered Marcos-linked assets in the Philippines amounting to P50 billion and $683 million from Swiss bank accounts.

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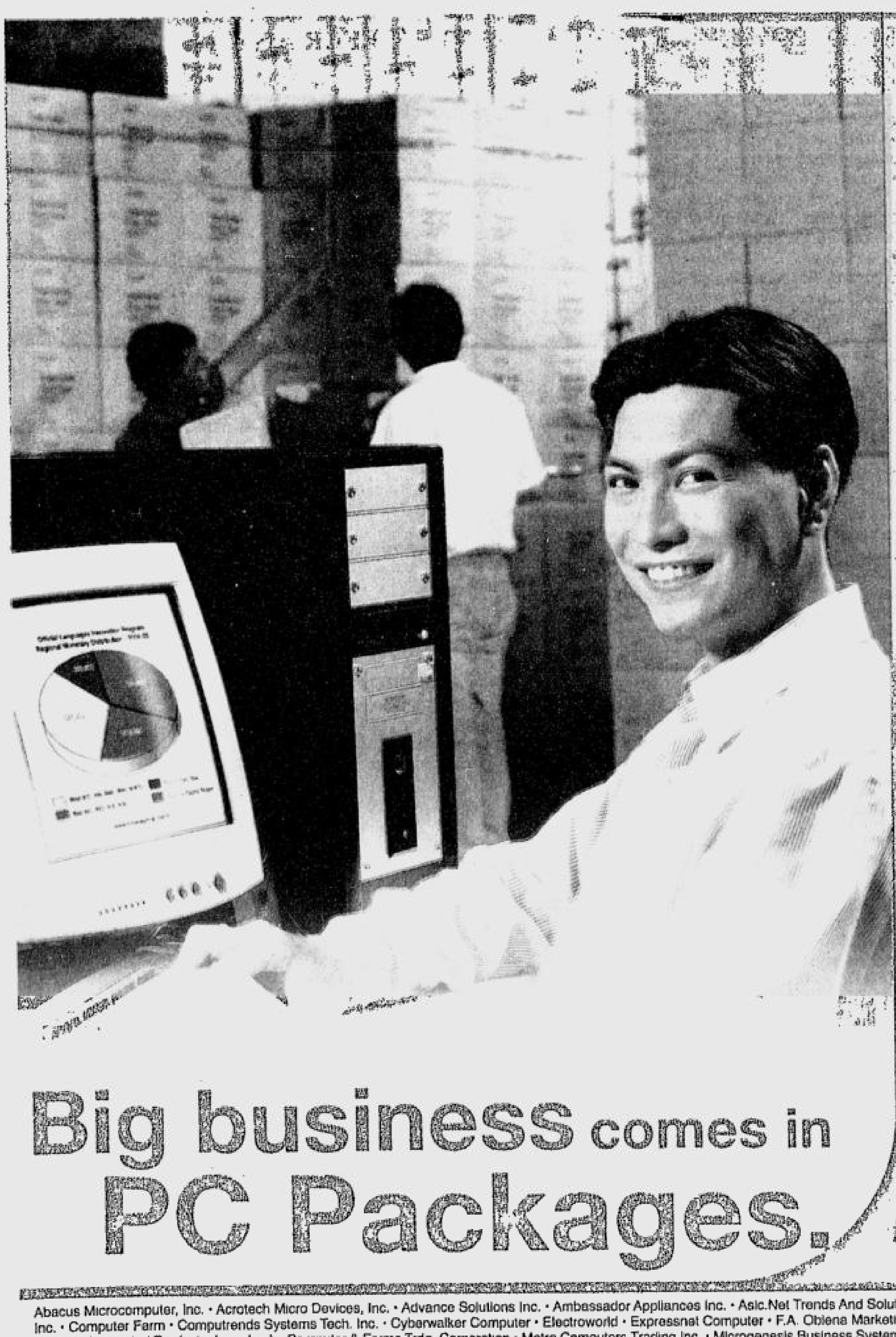

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Teves: Deferring VAT will hurt poor

From page A1

to lift the freeze order on the VAT law, which will raise prices by ending exemptions for several items, including electricity and fuel, and further burden the poor.

Ishmael Khan Jr., the high court's chief information officer, said there was no legal impediment for the government to defer the implementation of the VAT law should the court uphold its constitutionality.

"That's a matter for Congress and the implementing arm [of the government] to consider," Khan said.

Devil and deep blue see

Senate President Franklin Drilon said Ms Arroyo could not unilaterally defer the implementation of any law passed by Congress. She needs a joint resolution from both houses, Drilon said.

He said Ms Arroyo was caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.

If she defers the VAT law implementation, the international credit rating agencies will probably downgrade the country's rating and impose higher interest rates on the country's ballooning debts.

"However, to allow immediate implementation will mean gas prices going up to probably P40 per liter and the effect on basic commodities will really hit the common people," Drilon said.

Trial balloon

Drilon and other senators dismissed the proposal to defer the the VAT law's implementation as a "trial balloon," saying it was a ploy to save Ms Arroyo's neck now that she is facing impeachment.

"A cheap shot. Doublespeak. That is what Malacañang is into, to survive the political crisis even if the public and Congress be damned," maverick administration Sen. Joker Arroyo said.

Senator Arroyo's position was shared by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and opposition Sen. Serge Osmeña.

Senator Arroyo said that after "the in-house Rasputin" (Salceda) claimed he had advised the President to freeze the VAT law in case the Supreme Court lifts the temporary restraining order, Malacañang on cue said it was studying the matter.

"Hypocrisy, plain and simple," Senator Arroyo said. "The actual status is that after the Supreme Court had issued the TRO the government started to mull over this ticklish matter quietly side by side with the impeachment problem because while the provincial public could be indifferent to the impeachment, the national public will be outraged if prices keep going up."

Hypocrisy

He said Malacañang's hypocrisy was there for all to see. "That the price of oil could shoot up beyond $70 per barrel was already factored in and anticipated during the three-month VAT congressional hearings and debates. Thus Malacañang always knew this."

He said Ms Arroyo and her Cabinet, including members of the so-called "Hyatt 10" who resigned and called for the President's resignation, had argued then that the budget deficit had to be plugged even if the public be damned.

"Now Malacañang will turn full circle, using the usable Rasputin who advocated passionately for the VAT in the congressional deliberations as the sounding board to test the waters. Moral of the story: All moves are to save the President, not the people, really," the senator said.

He said that as one who had consistently and strenuously opposed the VAT, he should have been happy with Malacañang's latest move. "I would be vindicated, but it is difficult to be, because it would amount to doing the right thing for the wrong reason."

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile reminded Salceda that his proposal for Ms Arroyo to put off implementation of the tax ran counter to the spirit of the law.

"You can't defer a law. The law says it's going to be effective on a given day. Not even the President can stop the operation of the law. You can't suspend it. A law is a law," Enrile told reporters.

Wishy-washy

Osmeña said Malacañang's plan to put off the implementation of the tax law was unconstitutional.

He noted that the opposition had filed a petition in the high court questioning the constitutionality of the VAT, particularly the power given to the President to increase its rate from 10 percent to 12 percent.

"So this is worse. She's saying she can postpone implementation of a law passed by Congress. She cannot do that," Osmeña said.

"Two steps forward and two steps backward. An ominous move by a disturbed leadership," Magsaysay said.

"If we turn wishy-washy, we may suffer a credit downgrade and get hit by high interest rates," he said.

Expect a disaster

In the House of Representatives, Rep. Jesli Lapus said the "surest way to destabilize this country is not to solve the fiscal crisis."

Lapus, chair of the House ways and means committee, said he could not imagine what would happen to the economy should the President heed Salceda's advice.

"If total confidence is lost, expect a disaster. Heaven knows what will happen to us," he said.

Outside Congress, a consumer advocate has asked the government to only slap a 2- to 3-percent VAT on fuel.

Raul Concepcion said it would be better to reduce the VAT rate on fuel instead of deferring its implementation, which might lead to "loopholes" that could cause the government more problems.

"If prices stabilize at present levels, we are looking at P2.50 to P3 a liter increase for gasoline and about 50 centavos a liter more for diesel," he said. "It does not seem that prices are ready to cool off. I forecast strong global demand for both products come September." *With reports from Armand N. Nocum, Michael Lim Ubac and Abigail L. Ho*

'If we can't drill for oil, we can grow it from soil'

WILL THE Philippines soon be "growing" its own gasoline?

The people's "last best hope" for cheap fuel could come from the same crop that sweetens their tooth and enlivens their parties—sugarcane—Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri said yesterday.

Zubiri, an advocate of alternative fuels, said ethanol gas, which is sourced from sugarcane, would cost only P22 a liter compared to almost P34 per liter for gasoline.

"Sugarcane will not only put sugar in our coffee, or rum in our glasses, but also fuel in our cars," Zubiri said in a statement.

"If we can't drill for oil, we can grow it from our soil."

Capitalizing on the 380,000 hectares of land planted to sugar in the country, two foreign groups are building ethanol fuel plants in Negros Occidental and Bukidnon, Zubiri said.

He said all major oil players in the country had pledged to market the "alcogas" these plants would produce, while importing the ethanol they could blend with gasoline.

He added the government has planned that by 2010, 10 percent of the country's gasoline needs would be supplied by ethanol, which is made by fermenting and distilling crops with a high sugar content, such as sugarcane.

Zubiri said a national alternative fuel program being hammered out by the government and the private sector has for its target substituting 10 percent of national gasoline use with ethanol in five years.

"Soon, one liter of every 10 liters pumped into cars would come from sugarcane ...The country's energy savings would be around P33 billion a year." *Philip C. Tubeza*

Gov't agencies . . .

From page A1

rectorial staff, Deputy Director General Avelino Razon says he shuts his own unit off at 3 p.m., or two hours before offices actually close.

Blame the galloping price of crude oil in the world market for the change, at least outwardly, in the habits of some officials.

No less than President Macapagal-Arroyo, speaking on national television on Sunday night, called for a change in the lifestyles of Filipinos if they want to help the country survive the onslaught of an energy crisis.

Joining Ms Arroyo's appeal, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla called on the nation not to allow a situation where the government would have to ration gasoline and diesel to the public.

The message has been heard at Camp Crame.

Soon enough, one might even see top officials of the Philippine National Police going on foot from one building to the next instead of being ferried by big, expensive-looking cars.

Or the police may turn to bike patrols instead of car patrols, saving not only on fuel but also burning away calories and fat.

Easing the impact

They're simply doing their bit for energy conservation, and it's good for the heart, too, Razon told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Ms Arroyo and her advisers underlined the seriousness of the energy situation when they announced measures intended to ease its impact.

The price of crude oil shot to a record $67.10 a barrel last weekend. The figure dipped Monday but kept within striking distance of $67.

Dealers said the underlying tone remained bullish and expected the market to rebound shortly as global demand for oil was still robust.

Ms Arroyo said the government would take the lead in conserving energy and in coming up with programs with the help of business and the private sector.

Fluorescent lamps

On Saturday, she signed an executive order instructing all government agencies to reduce electric and oil consumption by 10 percent.

With transportation accounting for more than half of the oil being used in the country, Ms Arroyo vowed to work with the transport sector in coming up with an effective "bus dispatch system" and a program to maintain vehicles.

"We are asking the public to cooperate in the proper use of oil and electricity because these are getting expensive," she said.

"Everyone should think twice about our lifestyle and adjust the way we consume oil and electricity," the President said. "Opting to use fluorescent lamps, using mass transport and the proper use of appliances are among the measures that every Filipino can undertake."

Ms Arroyo also said that world crude prices had increased by 61.3 percent since December last year, but the country's domestic crude prices rose only by 14 percent in the same period.

Rolling stores

She urged the nation to start conserving energy now when domestic oil prices were not at the same levels globally.

Lotilla cited four measures the country could take to cope with the crisis:

- Stabilize prices of commodities.
- Create job opportunities.
- Implement a program on energy efficiency and conservation.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila said that by this week, the Department of Agriculture would increase the number of rolling stores selling affordable rice to the public.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry also pledged to help conserve energy by making use of fluorescent lamps in their offices.

Out with draperies

Favila said the DTI's four offices would start depending more on natural instead of artificial light by minimizing the use of heavy draperies.

For job creation, Lotilla said the release of P2 million from the road users' tax for rebuilding roads would mean more employment.

Ms Arroyo said she had instructed the Department of Science and Technology to look for other technologies, like the "gassification" being used in the United Kingdom.

The government will also ask the private sector to reduce its use of power by changing work hours and improving the efficiency of business operations. Supermarkets and gas stations will be asked to limit their operating hours.

"This will be voluntary and in moral suasions," Ms Arroyo said.

The National Power Corp. said that starting Sept. 1, it would make sure only power plants not using oil would be used until December.

4-day workweek

At the Senate, staff members and employees have discovered the wisdom of a four-day work schedule. They stuck with it even after Malacañang terminated a similar program for other agencies in late July.

Sure, the estimated 1,400 employees and legislative staff work 10 hours a day—from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday—but they get to rest every Friday and save on gas.

"It's much better than our old schedule because I get to rest the next day. We usually knock off from work late on Thursday nights," said Glenda Olid, media relations officer of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon.

Olid drives a car from her home in San Juan, Metro Manila, to work. She shells out P300 a day for gas.

Big savings

"Easily in one week we are saving one-fifth of the cost of power and water. So that's one source of big savings for energy," Senate Secretary Oscar Yabes said.

Now, on Fridays, the 15 government vehicles used to ferry Senate staff to official functions are sidelined, and only the senators' offices and the press office are open, according to Yabes.

An existing memorandum also directs staff and employees to turn off light and air-conditioning units from noon to 1 p.m., except in the senators' offices and the session hall.

Things may change

The chamber is likely to keep the schedule unless there is an impeachment trial of Ms Arroyo, Yabes said.

"If the impeachment is transmitted here, then we might have to work every day, not just four days," he said. *With a report from TJ Burgonio*

GMA aide warns of economic meltdown

From page A1

likely to stoke a second run of inflation and kill whatever growth impetus we have in our economy," Salceda said.

Imposing more taxes on consumers with the VAT on petroleum and power, he said, would only aggravate the economic slowdown.

"With consumption accounting for 82 percent of gross domestic product, a P3.50 [a liter] VAT on oil on top of the P3.20 [a liter] under-recovery cost (projected by oil companies) could just depress consumer confidence and jeopardize growth," he said.

"This would simply unleash the dragon of inflation that has been creeping up lately in the dungeon of manufacturing costs."

Middle-class biggest casualty

Salceda said the middle-class would be the biggest casualty of the VAT on oil and electricity because it accounts for 96 percent of oil purchases and 94 percent of all power sales in the country.

He said taxing oil and power would force the middle-class to dramatically cut down on spending that could eventually ground the economy to a halt.

"The VAT on oil is lumpy and concentrates on one product that is unluckily going through excessive external price pressures even without the VAT," he said.

What to do with the VAT is a "judgment call" of the President, a US-trained economist, but "Argentina provides a lesson," the congressman said.

Salceda has gained an ally in administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

Holocaust

Santiago, chair of the Senate energy committee, also wants the implementation of the VAT law deferred.

"Because of the stratospheric price of global oil, I believe that to implement the new law at this time will be disastrous to the poor. It will serve as a holocaust; we may as well throw the poor in gas ovens," she said in a statement.

She suggested three ways of suspending the VAT law: For the solicitor general to obtain a preliminary injunction from the Supreme Court; for the President to issue an executive order suspending the law; or for Congress to pass a resolution for the suspension.

"I urge the solicitor general to exert best efforts to secure from the Supreme Court a preliminary injunction against the implementation of the VAT law. The Supreme Court has issued a temporary restraining order, but it is effective only for 20 days from service on the person sought to be enjoined," Defensor said.

She said the solicitor general could file a memorandum that the preliminary injunction should be granted, "because the matter is of extreme urgency, and the economy will suffer grave injustice and irreparable injury."

Force majeure

In particular, the solicitor general, she said, should argue that force majeure has intervened in the case.

"Under the doctrine of force majeure, the parties to a contract are protected, if a part of the contract cannot be performed due to causes which are outside the control of the parties and could not be avoided by exercise of due care. In the VAT case, the force majeure is the rise of the global price of oil to $67 per barrel," the senator said.

Defensor said applying the tax at this time to oil and petroleum would be tantamount to taxing the poor beyond their means. "It would be unconstitutional, because the Constitution provides that the rule on taxation shall be equitable."

"If the Supreme Court fails to issue a preliminary injunction, I suggest that President Arroyo issue an executive order temporarily exempting oil and petroleum (meaning gasoline and electricity) from the VAT," she said.

Defensor said the President has the power to do so under the so-called "residual unstated powers" of the Chief Executive.

The senator said the doctrine of residual unstated powers was applied in the Philippines by the Supreme Court in the 1988 case of Enriquez v. Fortuna Mariculture Corp.

"The Supreme Court ruled that as long as there is no amendment of the law involved, but only the phased implementation of a law, there is no violation of the Constitution," she said. "Under this ruling, President Arroyo can phase in the implementation of the VAT law, by exempting oil and petroleum, until after global oil prices subside to normal levels."

Cruelty

Salceda also gained the support of Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra.

Mitra said the VAT should be shelved while world oil prices "are rampaging like an untamed bull."

"To impose it now is to commit unmitigated cruelty on the people. [It would be] tantamount to taxing umbrellas when it starts to rain or to ask a drowning victim to pay first a tax on a life jacket," Mitra said in a statement.

The VAT could be implemented once oil prices go down, he said.

"Ideally, the VAT is the right tax on fuel, for the audit trail can make honest companies out of oil firms, deter smuggling and, because it is a percentage tax, the tax is proportionate to the cost," he said.

"But when the price of the VAT-able item shoots through the roof, the prudent course of action is to suspend it for better times." *With a report from Philip C. Tubeza*

UP food tech grad appointed . . .

From page A1

Bush asked Scheib "to pick up his knives and leave." What followed was a lengthy selection process as the First Lady interviewed prospective chefs.

In recent months, the First Lady had been asking applicants to prepare test meals at special functions and private meals at home. She and US President George W. Bush are currently on vacation at their ranch near Waco, Texas.

As a known quantity, Comerford had a certain advantage over outside applicants.

"It's something Mrs. Bush had a comfort level with," said Susan Whitson, the First Lady's press secretary. "She knew what she was capable of and it was an opportunity to promote someone from within."

Female chefs pleased

Other female chefs were pleased with Comerford's appointment.

"I think it's incredible that they hired a woman," said Ann Amernick, one of the first women to hold a chef-level position at the White House, as an assistant to the former pastry chef Roland Mesnier. "I also think it's very good policy to bring people up within the ranks. I call it paying your dues."

Women Chefs and Restaurateurs, representing more than 2,000 female culinary professionals in the United States, may want to take credit for Comerford's elevation. The organization sent a letter to Laura Bush in May, asking her to consider a woman for the job because the appointment would be a role model for women.

"Throughout our history, women have been at the helm of feeding American families," the organization wrote. "Now is the time to have a woman at the helm of feeding America's first family."

But, according to the White House, none of the people suggested by the organization were interested in the job. The pay—$80,000 to $100,000 a year with no overtime—is well below what top-level chefs can earn on the outside.

Grueling job

While being executive chef at the White House has its share of prestige, the job also can be grueling. The head chef is responsible for designing and executing menus for state dinners, social events, holiday functions, receptions and official luncheons hosted by the US president and first lady for as many as 2,000 guests per month.

The Bushes are not known for the frequency of their official dinners. There were only four during the first term from 2001-2004 and only one so far in the second term, for the Indian leader.

But Laura Bush has signaled her intent to do more entertaining than during her husband's first term when the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks curtailed festivities. President Bush started his second four-year term at the White House in January.

Comerford prepared the menu for the White House dinner in honor of Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2003.

She also developed the menu for last month's honorary dinner for Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The 134 dinner guests dined on chilled asparagus soup and lemon creme; pan-roasted halibut, ginger-carrot butter, basmati rice with pistachio nuts and currants and herbed summer vegetables; and salad of Bibb lettuces and citrus vinaigrette.

Favorites

Comerford had been a favorite with Chris Ward, chef at the Mercury Grill, a restaurant at Dallas in the Bush's home state of Texas.

One top Washington chef, Eric Ziebold, had been approached, according to media reports. But the Times quoted him as saying that the White House job was "not a good career move."

Richard Hamilton, another reported candidate, said that whoever was chosen "may not be the best chef they can possibly find," but "the one with whom they are most comfortable."

Hillary Clinton also cleaned out the White House kitchen when President Bill Clinton took over. French executive chef, Pierre Chambrin, went.

Scheib, a California native and graduate of the prestigious Culinary Institute of America, was hired in April 1994 because Hillary Clinton wanted to feature American cuisine after years of French cooking ushered in by Jacqueline Kennedy. *Reports from AP, AFP, Reuters and New York Times News Service*

DepEd teachers, workers to undergo random drug tests

By Alcuin Papa

SOME 500,000 employees of the Department of Education (DepEd)– including 460,000 teachers – will be subjected to random drug tests starting this year.

According to Dr. Thelma Santos, chief of the DepEd Health and Nutrition Division, former DepEd secretary Florencio Abad had ordered the drug testing but this was not implemented because the agency was busy preparing for the opening of classes this year.

She said that drug testing is in compliance with Republic Act 9165 or Dangerous Drugs Act, which ordered the tests done on all government employees.

The tests will cost the department P50 million, Santos said. "The non-teaching personnel will be first to undergo the random drug testing and the teachers will follow," she said.

She said the department is still drawing up the guidelines for the tests. Officials of the DepEd are set to coordinate with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Authority (PDEA) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) for the tests.

The DepEd-National Employees Union (NEU) is supporting the drug tests. DepEd NEU president Domingo Alidon, who is helping draft the testing guidelines, said this would help cleanse the bureaucracy of drug users.

"This random drug test among employees also aims to enhance the quality of public service. We will never know if we might have already been infiltrated by drug users bringing in illegal substances inside the agency. But this must not be used by anyone for any criminal prosecution," said Alidon.

The DepEd has around 500,000 employees. Around 460,000 of these are public school teachers while the rest are part of the department's non-teaching personnel.

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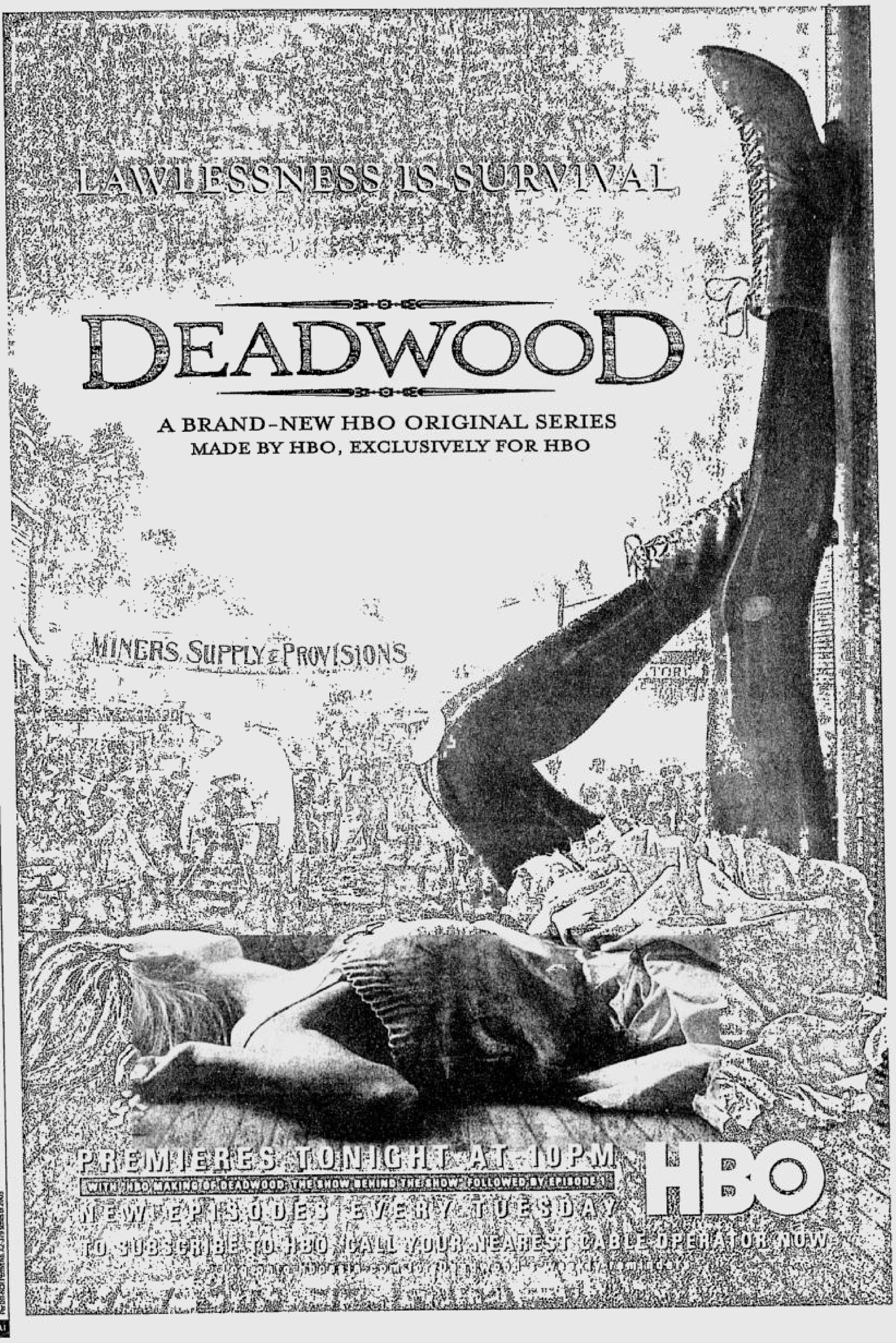
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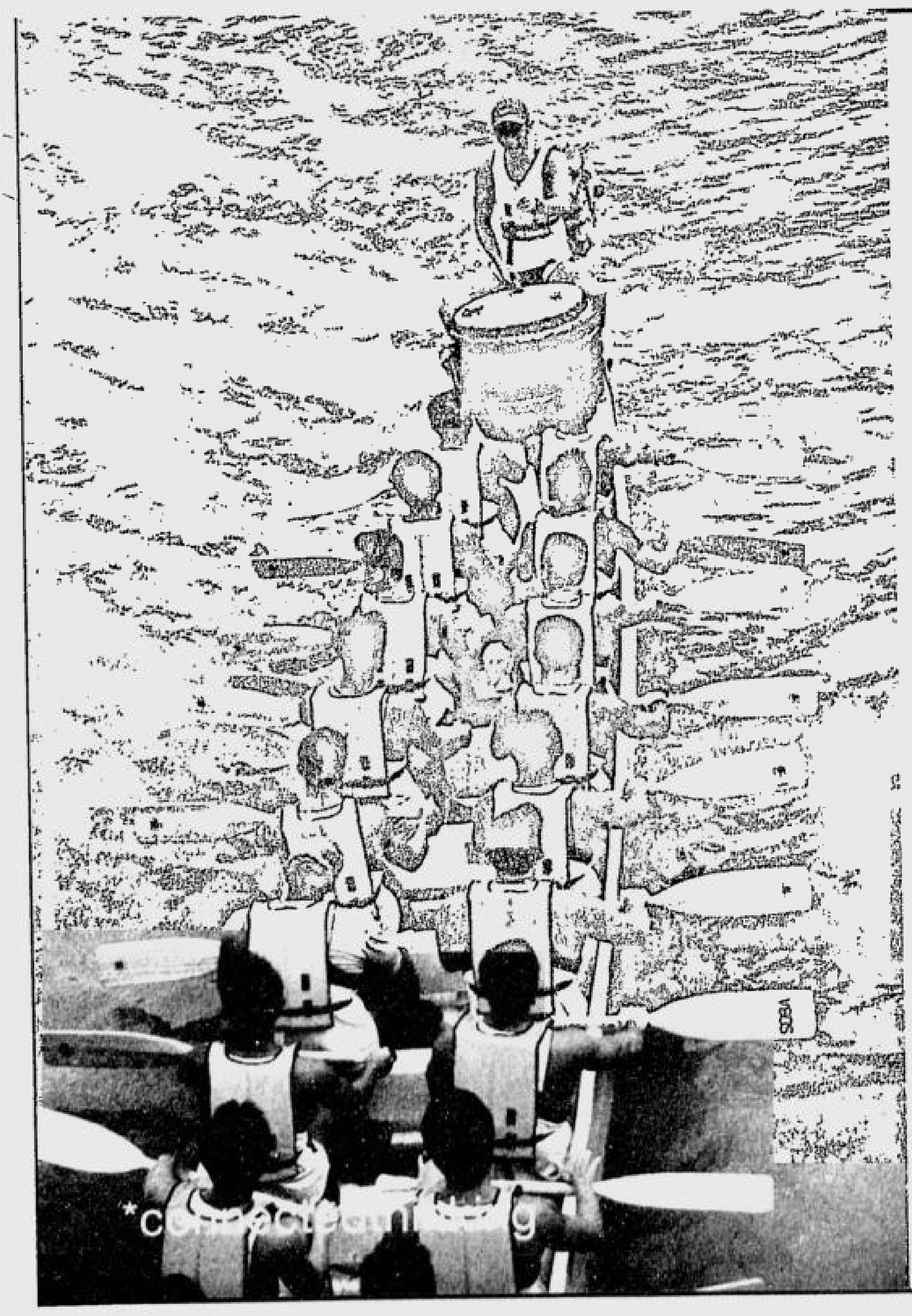

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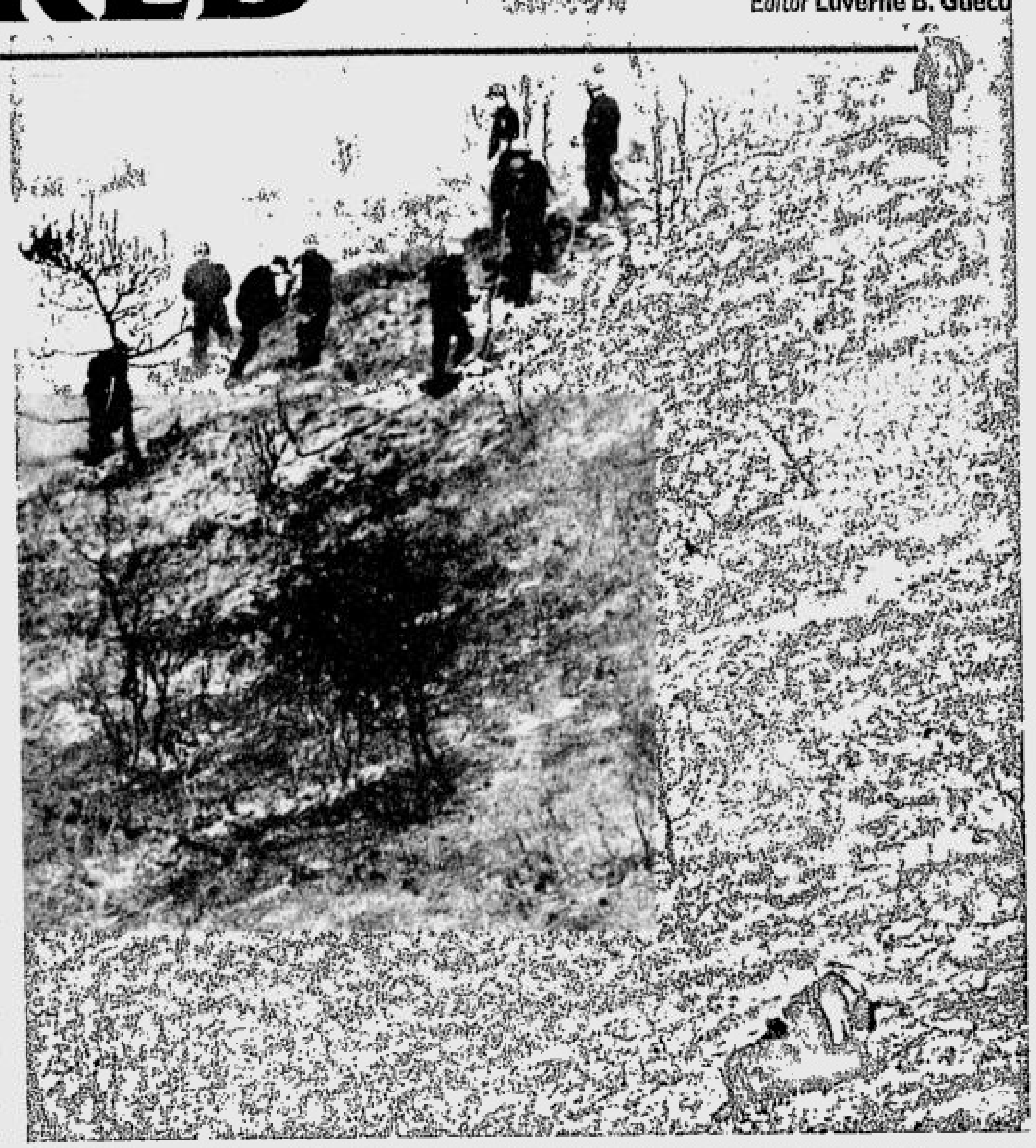
Crashed plane may have already been flying tomb



FIREMEN search through the debris of the crashed Cypriot passenger plane, Aug. 14. AFP

ATHENS—A Cypriot airliner that crashed in Greece may already have been a flying tomb when it plunged to earth with some of the 121 people aboard already either dead or unconscious, early indications suggest.

Manila yesterday said no Filipino was among the dead.

Sunday's crash, the worst air disaster in Greece and the worst involving a Cypriot airline, perplexed aviation experts astounded by what appeared to have been a catastrophic failure of cabin pressure and or oxygen supply at 35,000 feet—nearly 10 km up, higher than Mount Everest.

There was also mystery over the last minutes of the Helios Airlines Boeing 737 flight which was declared "renegade" when it entered Greek air space and failed to make radio contact, causing two F-16 air force jets to scramble to investigate.

All 115 passengers and six crew died, most burned beyond visual recognition, when the plane, with neither pilot in control, spiralled down in a death dive into a mountainous area about 40 km north of Athens.

The plane was on a flight from Larnaca in Cyprus to Prague with a stop in Athens. An airline spokesperson and Greek authorities denied some media reports that many of those on board were children.

Airport officials in Cyprus said flight HCY522 left Larnaca at 9 a.m. on Sunday and lost contact at 10:30 a.m.

Greek Defense Ministry officials said 90 minutes elapsed between the alert first being raised at 10:30 a.m. and the plane crashing at 12:03 p.m.

Greek government spokesperson Theodore Roussopoulos said the F-16 pilots sent to investigate reported that with the pilots out of action there may have been a last-gasp effort by others on the plane to bring it back under control.

"The situation was characterized renegade, meaning the aircraft was not under the control of the pilots," Roussopoulos told reporters, explaining how the crisis unfolded after the plane failed to make radio contact.

"At a later stage, the F-16s saw two individuals in the cockpit seemingly trying to regain control of the airplane," Roussoupoulos said.

"The F-16s also saw oxygen masks down when they got close to the aircraft. The aircraft was making continuous right-hand turns to show it had lost radio contact."

A passenger on the doomed plane said in an SMS text to his cousin in Athens: "The pilot has turned blue. Cousin farewell, we're freezing."

The plane broke into many pieces on impact, with the two engines 500 m away from each other, the cockpit a further 200 m away and the tail broken off a further distance away.

Greece's Defense Ministry said it suspected the plane's oxygen supply or pressurization system may have malfunctioned.

Loss of cabin pressure was identified as the probable cause of two similar but smaller-scale air crashes in recent years. *Reuters, Jerome Aning*

Fuel has become airlines' greatest cost

By Daphne Benoit

PARIS—With the inexorable rise of oil prices, aviation fuel has overtaken personnel as the greatest operating cost for airlines.

This issue was thrust back into the spotlight last week after the price of oil hit a new high of more than $67 a barrel on Friday in New York, compared with $55 at the end of March.

Tracking the change in the price of crude, aviation fuel reached 0.4053 euros/liter on Tuesday in Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

"Structurally, airlines are not built to deal with $63-oil," said Penny Butcher, an analyst at Morgan Stanley.

The surge in prices has meant airlines have had to adapt to a rapidly changing cost environment.

"Given the extremely competitive environment in the airline industry, a rise in the price of fuel forces airlines to choose between a rock and a hard place: to push the cost onto passengers with the risk of losing market share, or reduce their operating margins," explained Olivier Rech, an expert at the French oil institute, IFP.

Based on an average price of $47 per barrel—far below last week's level—the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has forecast that fuel costs will rise to $83 billion in 2005, from $61 billion in 2004.

Experts believe oil prices will stay at high levels, meaning the increase in fuel costs could choke off a recovery in a sector that has only recently emerged from three years of turmoil following the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States in 2001.

On Friday, chair of Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific airline, David Turnbull, said that the issue of fuel costs was "the biggest single problem" faced by the industry.

"The chances of our fuel bill falling is very small," he told reporters. "If it comes down, that's good for the airline, but that would (usually happen because) demand is falling, so that will mean we will lose on the revenue side."

Cathay Pacific said its fuel costs for the first half of 2005 had nearly doubled to $854 million from $492 million a year earlier.

Most airlines, with the exception of low-cost carriers such as Ryanair, have introduced fuel surcharges to pass on the extra costs to their customers.

Air France, like Japan Airlines, has added $48 to the price of an intercontinental flight. The increase has tested the price-sensitivity of passengers.

So far so good, according to figures: airlines reported an 8.8-percent increase in international traffic in the first six months of 2005, owing to strong demand in business and first class tickets.

But the fuel surcharge covers only a part of the increase in costs, forcing airlines to implement fuel-saving measures.

Fuel consumption has become an even more important consideration when renewing fleets, providing an incentive to aircraft manufacturers Airbus and Boeing to produce more efficient models.

The new Boeing 787, which promises to be 20 percent more fuel-efficient than a similarly sized equivalent, has been well-received by the market.

With fuel conservation in mind, industry association IATA has begun a campaign to shorten long-haul routes around the world and improve landing systems at airports to reduce unnecessary time spent in the air.

They hope to lower the industry's fuel bill by $700 million this year.

These efforts will have some impact, but some believe the main consequence of the price increases might be to prompt a wave of mergers in the industry.

"It will be interesting to see if this commodity phenomenon finally triggers the consolidation we need in the industry," said Butcher at Morgan Stanley.

"It would be a good consequence. It should have happened five years ago after Sept. 11." *AFP*

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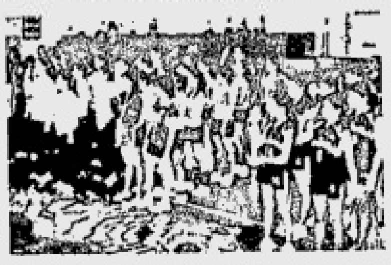
SHAKEY's GIRLS VOLLEYBALL INVITATIONAL LEAGUE formally opened last Sunday at the UST Gym drawing fourteen (14) Metro Manila High Schools. The League's defending Champion is Colegio San Agustin.



Seen in pictures are: Ms. Meggie Jose, Shakey's Marketing Manager and Mr. Vic Gregorio, General Manager of Shakey's welcoming all the participants. Mr. Gregorio said, "We will continue to support women's Volleyball to assist in the sport's development and hopefully mold these players into future National Team players".

Quoted in a read message from Philippine Volleyball Federation President, Roger Banzuela said, "In behalf of the PVF, we thank Shakey's for their support of Volleyball and congratulate the organizers for the successful staging of the Girls Volleyball Invitational League".

Last year's 3rd Runner-Up, Hope Christian School, beat a reinforced Diliman Prep Team in the opening day match 25-21, 25-17 followed by Phil. Institute of QC winning 25-23, 25-21 over Imus Institute.

UST's Paguinto, Lucindo, Lopez and Patnongon prevailed over E. Rondon's gallant efforts of Pepito and Lintohan to post a 25-19, 19-25 and 25-17 win in the only 3-set match.

Sunday games, August 21st, 9:00am at the UST GYM: UP Integrated School vs. University of the East; Phil. Institute of QC vs. De La Salle Lipa; Colegio San Agustin vs. Imus Institute; St. Francis Bacoor vs. Diliman Prep and ICA-Greenhills vs. University of Santo Tomas.

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Nonconventional oil a reality due to improved technology

By Amelie Herenstein

PARIS—The economic viability of heavy oil, sometimes called nonconventional oil, had long been considered doubtful, but is now a reality owing to improved technologies that put Canada and Venezuela in the spotlight.

Two years ago, Canada edged in between Saudi Arabia and Iraq as holder of the second largest reserves of oil according to the influential Oil and Gas Journal.

Proven reserves were estimated at around 180 billion barrels, but 95 percent of that are tarsands found in the western province of Alberta.

Until recently, bituminous substances such as shale oil and tarsands were not included in classifications such as that established by the journal, owing to major difficulties in exploiting the reserves.

Accounting methods remain a controversial issue within the oil sector, but the reserves are nonetheless there and they are gigantic.

At almost four trillion barrels, of which 600 billion are considered potentially exploitable, nonconventional oil represents a supplemental resource almost equal to the current reserves of conventional oil in the Middle East, according to the French Oil Institute.

"Extraction in some zones has already begun and is economically viable with a barrel at $25," the institute said. Last week oil prices hit new highs of $67 in New York and more than $66 in London.

"Valorization of heavy oil is without doubt one of the technological paths that must be mastered as quickly as possible," noted Francis Perrin, editor in chief of the trade magazine Le petrole et le gaz arabes (Arab Oil and Gas).

"The main interest is these are reserves that have already been discovered. There is no exploration risk. We have estimated them and they are absolutely gigantic," he said.

Serious obstacles remain such as the amount of water needed for or quantities of carbon dioxide released in the extraction process, but techniques have advanced a long way.

Once treated, nonconventional oil can be used to produce synthetic oil, which can then be refined and used in place of conventional oil.

As a result, the sector is humming, and two major operations were announced this month.

The US pipeline operator Kinder Morgan has acquired the Canadian group Terasen for about $5.6 billion.

Morgan said on Aug. 1 that Alberta oilsand reserves owned by Terasen were "expected to become an increasingly important supply source to North America and Asia."

The French group Total announced it would pay $1.11 billion for the Canadian Deer Creek Energy, which owns massive reserves near Athabasca, in the same western province.

Oil majors such as ChevronTexaco, ConocoPhillips and Total are also working on heavy oil reserves in the Orenoque region of Venezuela, where reserves are estimated at between 100-270 billion barrels.

The situation appears to be a bit more delicate than in Canada however.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is cranking up pressure on foreign oil companies to sign contracts that provide more royalties and tax revenue for his country. *AFP*

US Navy proposing high-tech, $3.3-B destroyer

WASHINGTON—The US Navy, seeking a greater role as America's military wages wars far inland, is pushing an expensive, experimental destroyer it says will be able to bomb targets well away from shore.

The Navy is trying to improve its ability to conduct fire support—using heavy guns to assist Marines or soldiers ashore, much like land-based artillery does. The frequency of such naval fire support missions have declined during conflicts of the last half-century, and the Navy has turned to expensive cruise missiles instead of guns to hit targets farther inland.

The proposed destroyer, called the DD(X), would fill a gap opened with the removal from service of the last battleships more than a decade ago, Navy officials contend. But the DD(X) has its critics, who say the Navy is betting on technologies that aren't fully developed and argue the ship is too expensive.

The first DD(X) is projected to cost $3.3 billion, but sister ships would be cheaper, the Navy says. Since 2004, however, the Navy's estimated costs per ship have gone up almost 50 percent for ships built after the first of their class, the Congressional Research Service says.

One proposal before Congress would cap the price per ship at $1.7 billion, forcing the Navy to redesign the DD(X) to something smaller and probably less capable.

The Navy also has reduced the number it wants to buy, from between 16 to 24 down to between eight and 12, prompting fears that the military won't give shipyards enough work and force one to close, the congressional researchers reported recently.

One group wants to see the World War II-era battleships USS Iowa and USS Wisconsin make a comeback, arguing their ability to bombard targets inland with their massive 16-inch guns is unmatched in the fleet. The vessels are inactive but could be returned to service with sufficient investment.

But Navy officials say they don't want the battleships returned to active duty, and there are proposals in Congress to turn them into museums.

Current cruisers and destroyers mount only 5-inch guns with a range of about 15 miles. The guns of the Iowa and Wisconsin can hit targets 30 miles distant with unguided shells carrying 1,900 pounds of high explosives.

The Navy says the guns of the DD(X) will far exceed the capabilities of those on the battleships and the current fleet.

The ship would carry two 155-mm guns that fire rocket-propelled rounds. Current test versions of the gun have hit targets 68 miles away. The Navy hopes to reach 96 miles. Navy officials also talk about an electromagnetic rail gun, possibly available by 2020, that can hit targets 350 miles away.

Where the battleships fire unguided shells and destroy targets though massed firepower, rounds from the guns of the DD(X) will be guided by satellite positioning data, like many modern aircraft bombs and missiles, and be far more precise.

The first DD(X) isn't expected to join the fleet until 2013 or so, presuming it continues to receive funding. The Navy also is working on a rocket-propelled shell for its current warships, but that is unlikely to be ready until 2010.

The Navy makes other big promises regarding the DD(X): It will be stealthy and as difficult to detect as an attack submarine; it will have a radar able to pick out targets from along crowded coastlines; it will be heavily automated and need only a small crew.

The ship will also carry at least one helicopter, unpiloted drones, small guns to fight off attacks by small boats, and surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles.

Many of those who are pushing the return of the battleships as an alternative to DD(X) are members of the United States Naval Fire Support Association, a group of retired military and security officials, who say the absence of battleships exposes ground troops to significant risks.

"The highly effective and versatile battleships are an incredible bargain and should be readied for rapid reactivation, instead of being turned into museums," William L. Stearman, a Navy veteran and the group's executive director, wrote in an e-mail. "Our constantly dwindling fleet could use their massive infusion of firepower and their commanding presence, so effective as an awesome, massive visible show of force where we want to get people's attention and respect."

But Rear Adm. Mark J. Edwards, the Navy's surface warfare chief, says the Navy doesn't want the battleships back for several reasons, most notably the 1,300 to 1,500 crew who are required to operate each one. Plans for the DD(X) call for a crew of 150 or fewer, making the ship far less expensive to operate.

Navy officials also prefer the precision and range of the new destroyer's guns over the raw destructive power of the battleship's.

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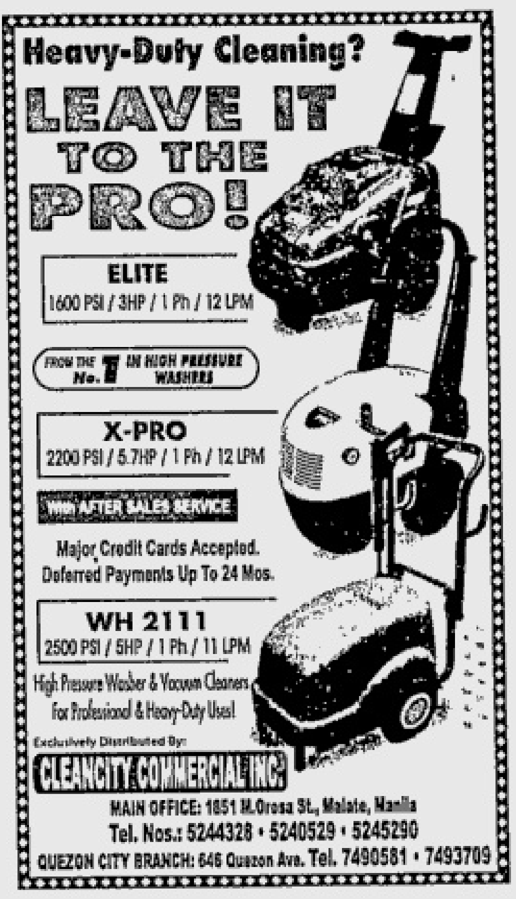

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Israel begins Gaza pullout despite settler defiance

NEVE DEKALIM SETTLEMENT, Gaza Strip—Israel began its historic operation Monday to pull out of the Gaza Strip after 38 years of occupation, meeting anger and defiance from settlers being uprooted from their homes.

Thousands of Israeli police and soldiers moved into Gaza to tell Jewish settlers they had 48 hours to leave or be forcibly evicted after their continued presence was declared illegal at the stroke of midnight.

"This is breaking our hearts but it is vital for the future of the democratic state of Israel," Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz said.

Police and soldiers began going door-to-door in the settlements on the Mediterranean coast to deliver eviction notices but had to swiftly abandon the operation in the largest community after residents blocked the entrance.

But as defiant settlers angrily denounced their former cheerleader Ariel Sharon, Mofaz made clear that Israel intended to keep hold of large West Bank settlement blocs in any peace deal with the Palestinians.

Around seven hours before Israel began handing out the eviction notices, the main Kissufim junction into Gaza was closed to the settlers for the last time.

"From this moment on, all entrance and stay in Gaza is prohibited for Israelis by law," Army spokesperson Maj. Sharon Feingold said.

Furious settlers promptly smashed car windows, set fire to tires at the Neve Dekalim entrance and tried to slash the tires of a military vehicle in protest.

Efforts by officials from the main settlers' lobby Yesha to calm down the crowds fell on deaf ears and journalists were assaulted by irate youths.

"This is not what we planned but we cannot control these young people," one of the main leaders of Yesha, Shaul Goldstein, told AFP.

"This activity undermines our struggle," added Goldstein who is the mayor of the Gush Etzion regional council in the occupied West Bank.

Although there was no resort to violence in the morning, the presence of around 1,000 settlers massed around the entrance of Neve Dekalim led police to abandon their plans to deliver the eviction letters.

"If they don't let us inside, we are not going to force our way in," police spokesperson Supt. Eli Levi told AFP.

"We are not going to enter the settlement. They have two days to evacuate of their free own will but at midnight on Tuesday it's the end."

The operation marks the first time Israel has withdrawn from Palestinian land occupied in the 1967 Arab Israeli war.

Mofaz said the pullout was an extremely painful process but stressed it was vital that laws passed in parliament be respected. "The state has decided and now it is the time to carry out that decision," he said.

Army chief of staff Gen. Dan Halutz said in a final briefing to his top brass Sunday that only 50 percent of settlers would leave their homes by Wednesday and acknowledged that the ranks of the Gush Katif settlers had been boosted by up to 5,000 right-wing activists.

His assessment was endorsed by settler leaders who predicted that a majority of the 8,000 Gaza settlers would stay until the bitter end.

There was no sign of settlers leaving Gaza through Kissufim early Monday, according to an AFP correspondent at the checkpoint.

Meir Dahan, a longtime Neve Dekalim resident, said he wanted to leave but the Army had so far failed to provide him with removal containers as promised.

"I just want to get out and abide by the law," said the bank manager.

The settler leadership has urged supporters not to use violence against the Army, reserving much of their venom for Sharon who was for years seen as their ultimate champion in government.

The prime minister, who is due to address the nation in the evening, believes his plan will enable Israel to retain control of West Bank settlement blocs where the vast majority of the 245,000 settlers.

Mofaz singled out six areas that would remain under Israeli control in any peace deal with the Palestinians.

"The settlement blocs in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and the Jordan valley will remain under Israeli control," he told Army radio.

Sharon was hosting a Cabinet meeting at which ministers were to give their final seal of approval to the evacuation of specific settlements.

The government has so far only formally approved the evacuation of three isolated settlements. *AFP*

AN ISRAELI girl cries as she holds on to the front gate of the southern Gaza settlement of Neve Dekalim Aug. 15. More than 50,000 Israeli soldiers and policemen took part in uprooting 8,000 settlers and their supporters from the Gaza Strip.

AFP

Indonesia, rebels sign Aceh peace deal

HELSINKI—The Indonesian government and rebels from Aceh signed a truce on Monday aimed at ending nearly three decades of fighting in the province devastated by last December's tsunami.

The deal, signed in Helsinki by Indonesian Justice Minister Hamid Awaluddin and Malik Mahmood of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), provides for an amnesty and disarming of the rebels and restricts government troop movements in Aceh.

Disarmament begins on Sept. 15 and will be monitored by officials and soldiers from the European Union and Asia.

Finnish mediator Martti Ahtisaari hailed it as the "beginning of a new era for Aceh," whose people had a chance to "live their lives in a peaceful, just and democratic society."

The Indian Ocean disaster, which left an estimated 170,000 Acehnese dead or missing, prompted negotiations which resulted in GAM dropping its historical demand for independence and Jakarta agreeing to let the rebels enter local politics.

"In Aceh, we feel that this new (Indonesian) government is sincere in its desire for peace, whatever the motive is," GAM negotiator Mohammad Nur Djuli told Reuters before the ceremony.

Successful implementation of the truce in one of Asia's longest-running conflicts could smooth the way for a $5-billion internationally backed reconstruction program in Aceh.

It may also lure investors looking for stability in the world's fourth most populous country. The peace deal entitles Aceh to a bigger share of revenue from its oil and gas reserves.

Jakarta and GAM have blamed one another for sporadic clashes in the province since the deal was agreed last month. Military officials said one rebel was killed on Saturday. But GAM says its fighters will start laying down their weapons immediately.

"We are still very worried about the possibility of the Indonesian government not being able to control the military. But we have to have some faith," Nur Djuli said in an interview.

In Aceh many are unaware of the peace process or too busy rebuilding from the tsunami that left 500,000 people homeless in the devoutly Muslim province of 4 million people.

"I'm not sure whether I should be optimistic or pessimistic about this agreement. The Acehnese have been suffering for far too long," says Zulfikar, a 17-year-old tsunami survivor.

The pact stipulates the Indonesian military cannot move more than a platoon of troops at a time in Aceh without informing foreign monitors, according to a copy obtained by Reuters.

The province, on the northwest tip of Sumatra island, has a long history of revolt against Jakarta and Dutch colonial rule.

Monitors face a tough task ensuring the warring sides avoid a return to fighting, which sank previous talks. *Reuters*

Iran backing Iraqi rebel bombers, Time reports

WASHINGTON—An Iranian-backed network of insurgents in Iraq is responsible for a new type of lethal roadside bomb, part of plans by Tehran to influence its neighbor that began even before the US invasion, Time magazine reported on Sunday.

Citing a US military intelligence document, the magazine said that over the past eight months, a network of insurgents led by a man named Abu Mustafa al-Sheibani had introduced bombs based on a design from the Iranian-backed Lebanese militia Hizbollah that can easily pierce battle tank armor.

The document estimated that al-Sheibani's team comprised 280 members divided into 17 bomb-making teams and death squads, Time said.

This appeared to be part of an Iranian plan for gaining influence in Iraq that began before the United States invaded in March 2003, Time said. Its investigation was based on documents smuggled from Iran and interviews with US, British and Iraqi intelligence officials, as well as an Iranian agent, armed dissidents and Iraqi militia and political allies.

Time cited an unnamed senior US military official in Baghdad as saying one of the new bombs killed three British soldiers in Amarah last month.

"One suspects this would have to have a higher degree of approval (in Tehran)," it quoted the official as saying. *Reuters*

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MTV Philippines	MTV Screen	Wildboyz # 203	MTV Pop Inc		Laguna Beach # 107	Hangin Out at MTV	MTV Get Spotted	TRL		MTV Play		Divas (Hiphop)		One Bad Trip # 106	Newlyweds # 304	Advance Warning # 107	Handpicked: Browbeat	MTV & VH1 Present Right To Royalty By HP (Parts 1 & 2)	
MYX	Star MYX	Urban MYX	Rock MYX	OPM MYX	My MYX	Take 5	MYX Backtrax	MYX Firsts	Mellow MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops	Mobile MYX Top Picks	My MYX	OPM MYX	MYX Backtrax	Mellow MYX
CNN		Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		Your World Today	
ESPN								Pool/Snooker Rack 'Em Up 4				Sportscenter Asia	World Snooker Tour Embassy World Champs						Sportscenter Asia
Solar Sports	TV Shopping		WTA 2005				FIVB Montreux '05						Sports Desk	Fed Cup SFinals Day1 '05				NBA Inside Stuff	Basketballography M. Jordan
Sports Plus						Tour De France Highlights		World's Greatest Auto Shows		Monster Jam	Tour De France	The International Highlights		Sirius Satellite Radio Highlights		Celebrity Poker Tournament			
Cinemax	Charade			Footloose (4:15PM)				Gold Diggers: The Secret Of Bear Mountain			Balmain Boys			Fire Down Below			Trucks (10:45PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Regenesis		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Bewitched	Ladies Man	Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		Regenesis		Dog Gone Love			Agency II (10:35PM)		Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-talkative Bunny	So Little Time	Buzz Lightyear Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Muppet Treasure Island		Sabrina, The Animated Series	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Going To The Mall			
Discovery Channel		Reputations		Discovering The Real World Of Harry Potter		The Ultimate Guide		Japan's War In Colour		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Stormproof		Science Mysteries	
National Geographic		Air Crash Investigation		The Mafia		Riddles Of The Dead		Dogs With Jobs	Hayden Turner's Wildlife Challenge	Wow! Walking With Lions		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation		The Mafia	
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Codename Kids Next Door	Duck Dodgers	SD Gundam Force	Medabots	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Johnny Bravo	Time Squad	Thundercats	Codename Kids Next Door	Duck Dodgers
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues/What Planet Are You From	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot/Right On Top	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	Fairly Odd Parents- New Episode	All That	Naturally Sadie	Sabrina, The Teenage Witch	Drake & Josh	Romeo	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	Are You Afraid of the Dark?
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Second Look		Look For Less	Life & Style		E! True Hollywood Story		Road & Track	Back To Basics
Star World	Becker	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Buffy The Vampire Slayer		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Ed		Desperate Housewives		Tru Calling		Friends	Ed
AXN		When Animals Attack		When Animals Attack		Now See This	Now See This	PSI Factor (Season III)		Beastmaster		Ripley's Believe It or Not		CSI: NY (Season I)					
JackTV	Kid Notorious	Just For Laughs	Beat The Geeks	WWE Bottomline		WWE Afterburn		X-Play	Banzai	Mad TV		Trigger Happy TV	Primetime Glick	South Park	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Stripperella	Family Guy	Wwe Heat	
ETC		Good Morning Miami	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	JKX	Simple Life	One Tree Hill		For Love Or Money		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
HBO			Multiplicity (3:25PM)				Beauty And The Beast (5:25PM)			The Lord Of The Rings The Two Towers						Deadwood 01: Deadwood (10:15PM)		Gigli (11:15PM)	
Star Movies			The Hand That Rocks The Cradle (3:40PM)				Veronica Guerin			Barbershop (7:15PM)				Bridget Jones's Diary			Air Force One (10:40PM)		
Cinema One		Ang Dayuhan				Tirik Sa Dibdib				Gagamboy				Burlesk King Daw O...				Fong Shui	
EWTN	Anagels Of God	Angelus (3.15PM)	Saints For The Third Millennium: St. Therese Of Lisieux	Faith Factory B	Angel Force	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Pope Pius XII	The Journey Home		Daily Mass Live		Angelus (9.15PM)	Swear To God	The Sacraments Through The Ages	St. Catherine Of Sienna	Web Of Faith	

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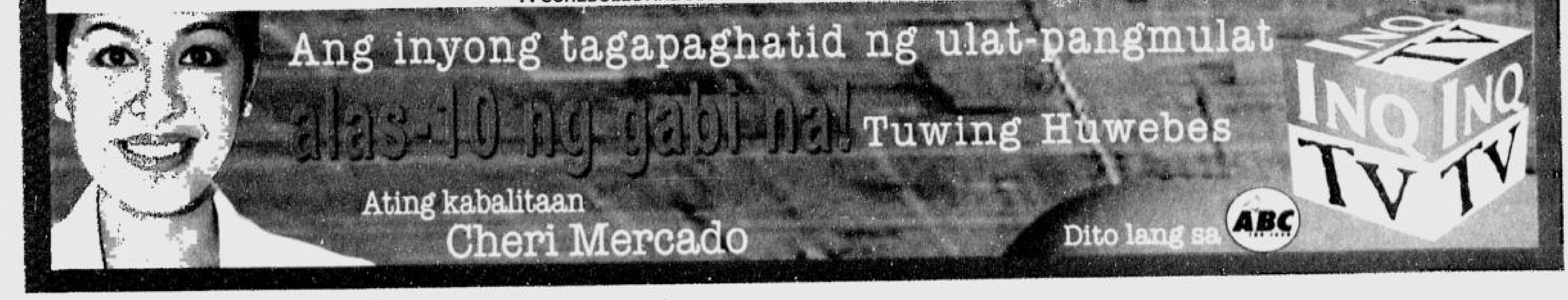
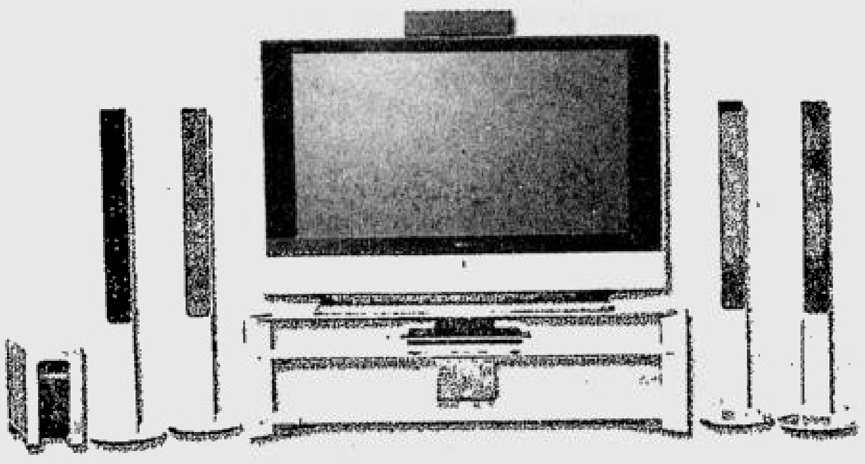


PHILIP MORRIS 100's

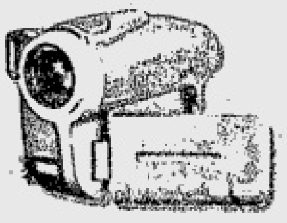
WIN A COOL CAT

① 2005 JAGUAR X-TYPE
2.0 V6 CLASSIC

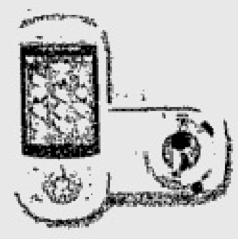
③
SONY
Grand Wega 50" KF-WE50A1
Home Theater DAV-SR4W



⑩
SONY
Digital Camcorder
DCR-DVD803



⑮
SONY ERICSSON
S700i



㉚
SONY
Cybershot DSC-T7

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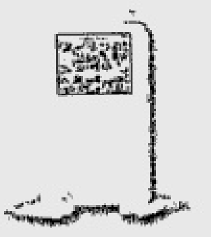
APPLE
iPod Photo 30GB



THE 2005 *PHILIP MORRIS 100's* "WIN A COOL CAT" PROMO OFFICIAL RULES

- Promotion period is from August 1 to September 25, 2005.

- Only adult smokers 18 years old and above (as of August 1, 2005), who are Philippine residents, and living in Luzon (excluding Bicol) and Visayas can enter the *PHILIP MORRIS 100's* "WIN A COOL CAT" promotion.

- To enter the draw, write down your name, address, age (as of August 1, 2005) and signature at the back of an empty pack of any Philip Morris variant (*Philip Morris 100's* Soft Pack or *Philip Morris 100's* Flip-Top Box).

- Only genuine and original *Philip Morris 100's* packs manufactured by Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc. (Philip Morris) purchased in the Philippines, and bearing the Philippine Government health warning and pack seal with complete information requested in item 3, will be accepted as valid raffle entries.

- No photocopies or counterfeits of *Philip Morris 100's* packs will be allowed. Once submitted, all *Philip Morris 100's* packs will become the property of Philip Morris, including the right to edit, publish, and use the information therein without any consideration or payment to the applicant. Sign-up Forms will not be acknowledged or returned.

- Drop your entries in drop boxes at authorized retail outlets/drop centers or mail to:

PHILIP MORRIS 100's "WIN A COOL CAT" PROMO
c/o Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc.
MCC P.O. Box 2338
1299 Makati City

- All entries must be received by Philip Morris not later than September 25, 2005. Philip Morris and its agents will have no responsibility for lost, illegible, incomplete, misdirected, mutilated, postage due, or late entries.

- The draw will be held on October 15, 2005 in the presence of a DOH-BFAD representative. The following prizes will be drawn:

Quantity	Description of Prize
1	2005 Jaguar X-Type 2.0 V6 Classic
3	Sony Wega 50" TV (KF-WE50A1) w/ Home Theater Set (DAV-SR4W)
10	Sony Digital Camcorder DCR-DVD803
15	Sony Ericsson S700i mobile phones
30	Sony Cybershot DSC-T7 digital cameras
50	Apple iPod Photo 30GB

- The names of the winners will be published in one of the leading newspapers not later than October 31, 2005. Winners will be notified via telegram as to when and where they can claim their prizes. By participating, the winners agree to the inclusion of their names and/or pictures in the Winners Ad.

- Prizes will only be awarded to the person whose name appears on the winning entry. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from publication of the winners, or notification of winners, whichever comes later, will be forfeited with the written approval of the DOH-BFAD.

- In claiming a prize, the winner must present the original notification telegram from Philip Morris and two (2) original and valid identification documents [Driver's license, Passport, Birth Certificate] and his Tax Identification Number (TIN). The IDs presented (singly or collectively) should show the following information below. If the IDs submitted do not contain these three (3) information, it will not be accepted as valid proof of identification:

Full Name
Date of Birth or Age
Signature

- In case the winner is unable to present two (2) original and valid ID's acceptable to Philip Morris, he must submit sworn affidavits, executed by two (2) disinterested persons attesting to his identity; and a certification from the responsible municipality/city official certifying that he is a resident of the said municipality/city.

- In cases wherein the winner cannot personally claim his prize for any reason, he can send a proxy on his behalf. The proxy should be able to present the following:
  - A letter of authorization duly signed by the winner, nominating the proxy as the acknowledged recipient of the prize on the winner's behalf
  - Two (2) original and valid ID's of the winner (singly or collectively showing the required information as mentioned in item 11)
  - Two (2) original and valid ID's of the proxy.
  - Original copy of the notification telegram from Philip Morris.

- An entrant can only win once. If a name is drawn more than once, the winner will receive the prize of a higher value and a winner for the other prize will be re-drawn.

- Prizes are not transferable or convertible to cash.

- Prizes will be supplied with standard dealers' warranties only, where available. Philip Morris and its agents will not be liable with respect to: (i) any death or injury or consequential loss or damage arising from the use of any prize; (ii) any dealer's refusal to honor any warranty.

- Prizes are subject to availability and supplier's restrictions. Philip Morris may, without notice, withdraw or substitute any prize with comparable value and nature.

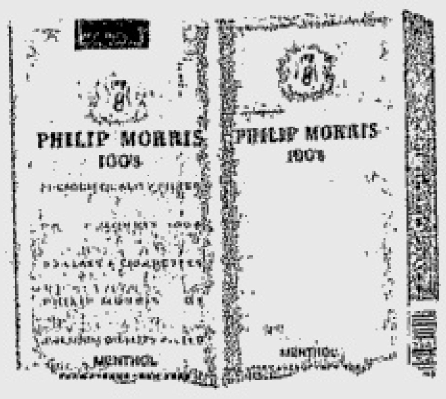
- Philip Morris will only shoulder final withholding taxes on prize amounting to more than PhP 10,000. Except as expressly provided herein, Philip Morris will not be liable to the winners for any taxes, costs, liabilities or expenses that may arise out of ownership or use of the prizes.

- All decisions of Philip Morris and its agents are final and no objections will be entertained.

- Employees of Philip Morris, their affiliates, distributors, advertising and promotional agencies, as well as their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity and affinity, and DOH-BFAD are not eligible to participate in this promotion.

- These terms and conditions are subject to any relevant law, government direction and regulation. The promotion will be void where prohibited or restricted by law. Venue of any action arising under this promotion shall be brought solely in the proper courts of Makati City, all other available venues of suit being waived.

Philip Morris 100's. Premium Taste in Menthol.



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Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

ISSN
0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 20 No. 249

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

OPINION

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The Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

Publisher **Isagani Yambot**
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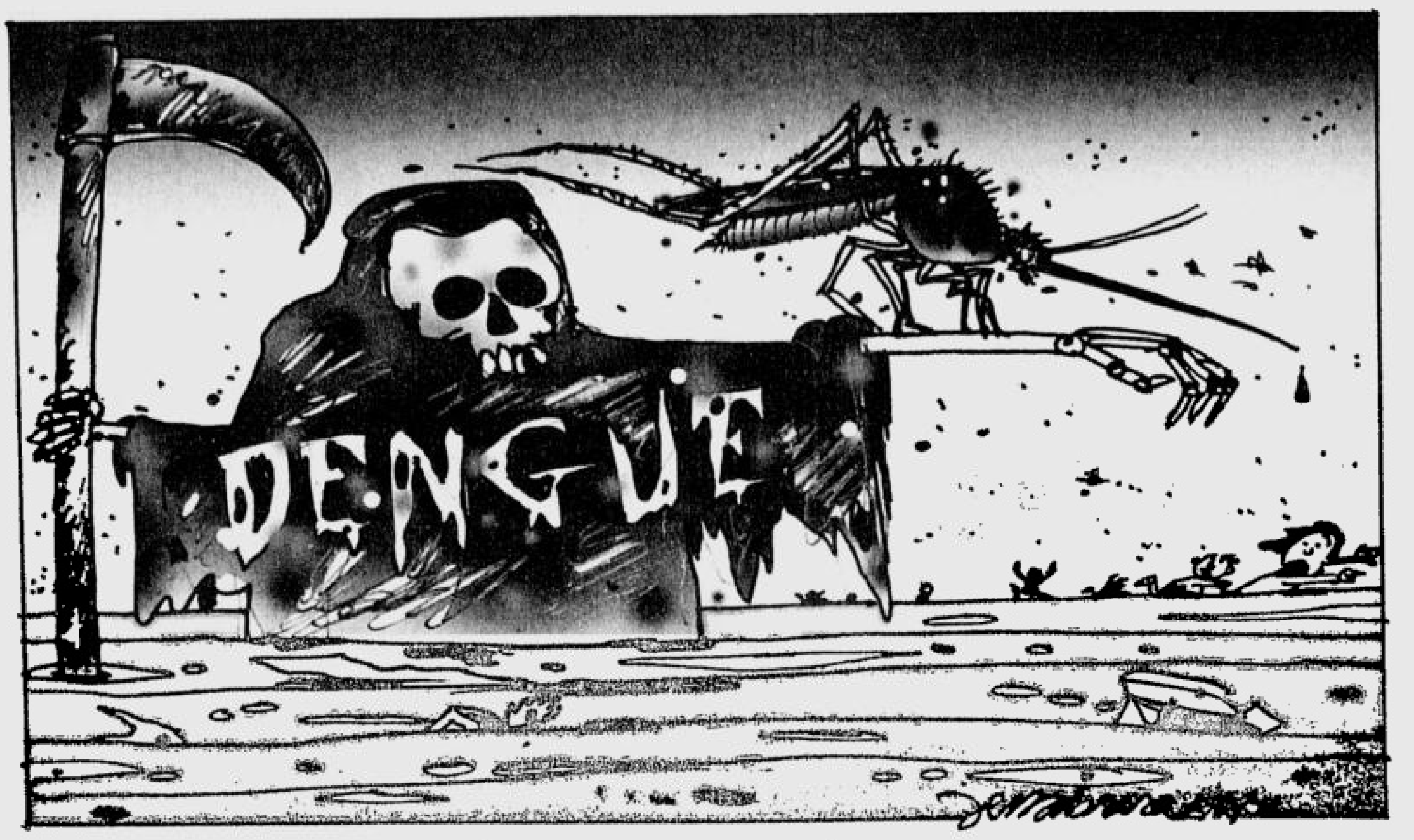

Change in lifestyle

EDITORIAL

OIL futures last week breached the $67-a-barrel mark in New York, and so far no relief is in sight. It appears that in the near future as well as in the long term, the global economy is in for another period of high oil prices.

The Philippines, which is 55 percent dependent on fossil fuels for its energy needs, is greatly affected by the constantly rising prices of oil. Analysts estimate that every dollar increase in the price of Dubai crude adds about P500 million to the country's annual oil bill.

This is additional expenditure that the country, which is already pressed for funds, can hardly afford. Thus, President Macapagal-Arroyo and business leaders have agreed that the best solution to the oil crisis is to cut down on the country's consumption of 330,000 barrels a day.

A huge reduction in the country's consumption of oil will entail a drastic change in the lifestyle of the people. Many of them will have to walk or bike to work. This will mean not only savings in fares and oil use but also daily exercise, and ultimately, a healthier work force.

Those who can still afford to drive cars will have to buy bantams and minis instead of the gas-guzzling AUVs, SUVs and CRVs. Some may have to switch to scooters or gas-powered skateboards. One version, the TT Racer, is light and can be maneuvered through the densest traffic.

Experiments should be pursued on the use of alternative fuels for vehicles such as alco-diesel, coconut methyl ester made from copra, compressed natural gas, ethanol and electricity. Some hybrid vehicles can be run on both gasoline and electricity.

Housewives will have to cut down on the use of LPG and electricity in the kitchen. One stove that runs on alternative fuels is the "green charcoal" stove that uses briquettes made of sawdust, corncobs, peanut shells, twigs and branches. Another is the "fantastic kalan" that uses wood chips, fresh coconut shells, charcoal and any hard combustible material. Several years ago someone made a stove that used compressed and balled old newspapers. We wonder whatever became of it.

More households will have to be encouraged to use solar energy for their daily needs. Some people think that solar energy is expensive. The initial installation of solar panels may be expensive, but in the long run, solar energy can be economical. In Negros Oriental last year, a study showed that for as low as P343 a month, rural households can run modern conveniences such as television sets, electric lights, radio sets and even karaokes using solar energy.

A 5-watt system can be installed for P35,000. In Negros Oriental, people can buy it for only P20,000 because they can get a P15,000 discount through a grant from the Netherlands government and a P5,000 subsidy from the provincial government.

The architecture of office buildings and homes will have to be changed to reduce the use of electricity for airconditioning. For starters, homes can be designed so as to allow the maximum circulation of air: high ceilings, many windows and doors and *ventanillas* or sliding wooden windows beneath the big windows of old houses.

Filipino architects would do well to study Arabic architecture, particularly that of Saudi Arabia. In Jeddah the most striking feature on the façade of a typical townhouse are the *rawashin*, great bay windows. The latticed *rawashin* serve three functions: providing privacy, enhancing the appearance of the house and providing good ventilation.

Today many public buildings and private homes have to use airconditioning because their architecture is Western; they are designed so as to conserve heat for fall, winter and early spring. This is illogical; we don't have winter in the Philippines. Why not use tropical architecture for a tropical country like ours?

Because less airconditioning will be used (we hope), people will also have to change the way they dress. Off with the heavy, thick and dark-colored woolen and flannel suits. Instead, more clothes made of cotton, linen and ramie will have to be used. For formal occasions, the elegant *pina* and *jusi* will have to be used, but some way must be found to bring down their prices.

For the poor, the current oil crisis will mean more scrimping and greater deprivation. The rich, for their part, could help reduce the consumption of costly oil by changing their lifestyle and adopting the philosophy of voluntary simplicity. Malacañang has said that energy conservation is now a matter of national survival. Everyone will have to contribute to the effort to reduce oil consumption if we are to keep our head above the water.

Skies smeared grey

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THE SKY is of the same color wherever you go," Persian sailors of old used to say. But that was before "smaze."

Spliced from "smoke" and "haze," the word is shorthand for what scientists call "transboundary atmospheric pollution." But smaze, by any other name, can maim.

Mixed with ash and dust, it is an eye-and-throat-scratching fume. Smaze rising from 197 uncontrolled forest fires in East Kalimantan in Indonesia smeared skies across Singapore, Malaysia and Southern Thailand in 1997-1998. It also reached Puerto Princesa and General Santos.

Those fires incinerated 9.5 million hectares of "unburnable" rain forests. At century's end, over $9 billion went up in smoke, the United Nations Environment Programme estimates.

Today, smaze from 993 "hot spots" on Sumatra is turning next door Malaysia's skies into a dreary grey. Schools shut down as the air pollution index hit 531, almost double the hazardous level. Respiratory diseases soared.

Danger signals were lofted in the Malacca Strait, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, Agence France Presse said. As visibility dropped down to 200 meters (660 feet), Subang Airport was closed. Infuriated Malaysians donned surgical masks again.

Smaze shows it's difficult to bottle within national borders the consequences of ecological abuse. "Acid rain" doesn't dally for passport checks. And poisoned schools of fish ignore the limits of 200-mile exclusive economic zones.

"(This) borderless world is the only home we have," scientist Jacques-Michel Cousteau warned. "From space, the only borders are natural: glistening coasts, blue rivers, thrusting mountains, billowing clouds—all indifferent to flags, parliaments and armies.

"(Nobody) condones the deliberate laying waste of such gifts, as air and water, that make life possible. (They) transcend national boundaries and divergent interests… If Earth is today's hostage, every nation is a prisoner held for a ransom that no nation can pay."

"Smaze" is a newcomer in our post-Chernobyl vocabulary. An earlier entry was "nuclear winter," which is now eerily reappearing as Iran and North Korea roll atomic dice. "Black rain" came from oil fields Saddam torched.

Yet, forests only form part—but a visible sector—of our environment. And smaze underscores that this country, which dissipated its God-given forests, is increasingly dependent on those of its neighbors.

East Kalimantan is Southeast Asia's remaining "lung." The Kashmiri proverb stresses: "Food will last only as long as forests do." So, regional food security is tied up in those burning timber stands. Southeast Asia is our nearest source for timber imports.

More than half (57 percent) of the country was still forested in 1934, former Environment Secretary Victor Ramos and Science Undersecretary Florentino Tesoro told the 2005 Philippine Forestry Development Forum. Today, this is down to 18 percent—far below the 30-percent safety benchmark. And it's still dipping.

Flash floods in Leyte, Aurora and Quezon demonstrate the impact. Denuded areas are blanketed by sterile cogon fields. And income is shrinking.

In the 1980s, lumber, plywood and logs were the country's fifth major export. By the 1990s, they dropped from the top 10 list and haven't bounced back since. "A prima donna of the world's timber trade in the 1970s, we're today's wood paupers."

"The transboundary haze problem in the Asean region is not a problem that can be fixed," the Asian Development Bank notes. "It is a problem that must be managed."

Like other Asean countries, the Philippines must first hammer into place adequate forest policies. Only then, can we, in concert with others, manage smaze's annual eruptions.

Use of fire to clear land goes way back. But El Niño droughts, intense enough to turn moist rain forests into dry tinderboxes, are new.

Still, incinerating trees to clear land remains a policy keystone in most Asean member countries. How to craft policy instruments that will provide economic incentives to discourage cleaning of land by fire is the key challenge.

"Asean is confronted with a dilemma: how to use regional cooperation to reduce (smaze) that ultimately results from national policy but imposes large economic costs on the region as a whole," the ADB notes.

The solution partly lies in mitigation measures. Kuala Lumpur is now prodding Indonesia to get on with it. The crucial other half lies in prevention at home.

The Philippines provided 4 out of 28 examples of outstanding Asian forest management, the Food and Agriculture Organization reveals in its new study, "In Search of Excellence." The four are: (a) Mount Makiling Forest Reserve; (b) Ifugao Muyong; (c) Kalibo's mangrove project; and Nueva Vizcaya's community-based management of ancestral land. Thus, the skills are there.

They could underpin a policy reform agenda which, as seen by Ramos and Tesoro, would constitute a full plate—from approving the Sustainable Forest Management Act, devolving management to local governments to providing economic incentives.

Bogged down by the impeachment brawl, perjured witnesses and perennially-squabbling politicians, can we muster the will to do the job?

"We have never seen a problem so big that we can't run away from," Charlie Brown mumbles in "Peanuts." But that option is no longer possible. Change is spilling across national borders "under skies of the same color."

(*E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph*)

Virus

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

TO ARCHBISHOP Oscar Cruz belongs the quote of the day. "What kind of government is this? Are we in a military state already? There are no more principles. There are no more values and morals. Everything is just about money, money, money."

He said that last week out of sheer disgust, as his witnesses began to recant and apologize to GMA whom they had earlier implicated in *jueteng*. The sudden turnaround took place shortly after Jose Pidal, aka Mike Arroyo, arrived from abroad looking like Santa Claus. He must have given some people an early Christmas.

Cruz's words are today's equivalent of Emmanuel Pelaez's agonized cry in the twilight of martial law, as he was being lifted into an ambulance after being ambushed on his way home. The brazenness of the attack and depths of blackness it spoke of overwhelmed him. He turned to a military officer at the scene and still trying to grasp the enormity of the deed asked: "What is happening to our country, general?"

Days after Cruz expressed his own near-disbelief at the blotting out of all light in this country, the recantation did not abate but became a full-blown epidemic. Even people who were dying from liver cancer preferred to look after their mortal fortune rather than their immortal soul and risk the wrath of the permanent master of Heaven rather than the temporary squatter in Malacañang. Overnight, recantation became the fastest growing cottage industry in the country, people discovering the value, if not the virtue, of turning their back on their word.

It's not entirely new of course, although it has some novel features. Media have known the trick all along in the form of "AC-DC," or "attack and collect, defend and collect." That is the practice, done by opinion-makers in particular, of attacking public figures and collecting from their enemies, then turning around and defending them and collecting from them.

The underworld has another, and better, word for it: blackmail.

What is happening to the country? Quite simply, all decency is being stamped out of it. All the values and institutions this country holds dear are being perverted to support the lie that GMA is its president.

At the personal level, the value of the Filipino word today has turned to Japanese money. (My apologies to Japanese money which, even at its worst, during the Japanese Occupation when Filipinos brought basketfuls of it to buy mouthfuls of rice, never became this cheap.) I know we are a forgetful country and cannot remember a time when *palabra de honor* meant something, when one's word was one's troth, when a "gentleman's agreement" (my apologies to the feminists, but that phrase is historical, not personal) was more ironclad than a written contract, but I don't know why, or how, we have sunk this low. These days, it has become the easiest thing to swear by everything you hold dear. You can always break it when it becomes inconvenient, or unprofitable. At worst, you can always say "I am sorry" with the voice of a zombie.

Can you blame the citizens for treating their word as a commodity to be auctioned off to the highest bidder when they have a president that has just shown that you could become president by doing so? Or indeed remain so for doing so? The wonder is not that Cruz's witnesses retracted, the wonder is that they held out for as far as they did. Indeed, the wonder is not that Faustino Dy has gotten cold feet, the wonder is that they ever got warm in the first place.

At the national level, the value of laws has been cheapened even more. Laws are as good only as the collective will is willing to enforce them. Bans and proscriptions mean nothing if someone can easily flout them and get away with it. Or if someone can just say, "I don't care about the law, this is what I want," and the people just shrug their shoulders and say, "Well, OK then."

The reason I am not particularly enthusiastic about an impeachment trial is not that, even if it passed in the House, it can be railroaded the way the counting of the votes in the last elections was railroaded by Francis "Noted" Pangilinan et al. to find GMA not guilty of stealing the presidency. It is simply that even if, after massively trying to buy off the impeachment court, GMA were somehow found guilty as charged, what of it? She can always ignore, or refuse to accept, the verdict of the impeachment court and say she will not step down because the impeachment court is wrong. And dare the world to force her out.

She has already done it. What can an impeachment court determine that GMA has not already admitted? When she confessed some months to be the person who "helloed" Garci, she admitted not just to an impeachable offense but to a criminal one. This is not a case where a president betrayed the public trust, this is a case where a non-president thwarted the public will. Yet all she said was: I refuse to accept that it is a crime, I refuse to believe I do not deserve Malacañang, I refuse to step down. And we seem powerless to make her do so. Why should we expect anything different after an impeachment trial? Indeed why should we expect anything different even after 2010?

The current occupant of Malacañang is the single biggest virus in this country. Not least literally: She is making people sick physically, some of them, including a couple of her electoral foes, have already died. But more than making this country sick in the body, she is making this country sick in the soul. You have a country where neither the individual's word nor the nation's laws mean anything anymore. you have nothing. Just a vast black void where the Philippines used to be.

Ask Faust what it means to be sick in the soul. Or lose one.

Abiding by the 'Cory Constitution'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Michael Defensor ran into fiercely hostile media attack during his press conference last week where he presented expert testimony about the alleged manipulation of the "Garci tapes." There was even some heckling. The hostility, however, should be hardly surprising, for the validity of the tapes goes to the very core of the election fraud issue against President Macapagal-Arroyo. Since then, more media fire has been concentrated on discrediting one of his resource persons, instead of the testimony of the experts.

To my mind, what Defensor's much-maligned effort was able to establish is that the tapes cannot be relied upon as the uncontested source of the "truth." Barry G. Dickey, an American forensic expert with impeccable credentials, has attested that they appear to have been tampered with.

* * *

I read the five page "Forensic Analysis" made by Dickey, who has been consulted in over 1,000 civil or criminal matters by the US government, major news networks abroad and private investigators. Despite the hysteria that greeted Defensor's disclosures, Dickey's conclusion is indisputable. Said he: "It is my opinion, based on the examination of the copy provided, that several anomalies exist which question the integrity of QA-1 (the material submitted to him, culled from the so-called 'Paguia tapes'—BOC). The results suggest that the audio is the resultant of several transfers, which involved the audio being recorded/encoded/decoded by different devices. With the exception of the variation of fundamental frequency referenced as 00:00:33:00-00:00:35:00, several anomalies associated with the time domain of 00:00:29:00-00:00:36:00 require further analysis of comparative exemplars created by the original recording."

The opposition has sought to discredit the Paguia tapes by claiming they are not the "original." Former Sen. Francisco Tatad says he has the original, and so does Homobono Adaza. Who's telling the truth? Ultimately, anomalies are anomalies are anomalies. It only goes to show that taken from any angle, those tapes cannot be used to impeach the President.

* * *

Former President Cory Aquino and Senate President Franklin Drilon made a surprise visit to Archbishop Angel Lagdameo of Iloilo City last week and reports said they talked about the impeachment process. Their visit is significant since Lagdameo will assume the presidency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines in December. Iloilo sources said Aquino and Drilon sought to convince Lagdameo that the CBCP should press the House to send the impeachment case to the Senate for trial, in order to find out the "truth" about the charges against GMA.

* * *

But I hope the good archbishop and the CBCP would also take the time to read the position paper published in this newspaper of four ex-presidents of the Philippine Bar Association: Rolando de la Cuesta, Judge Federico Alikpala Jr., Arsenio B. Yulo Jr. and Federico Agcaoili. The four asserted that the Constitution as well as cases decided by the Supreme Court, such as the ruling on the Davide case, explicitly say that there can only be one impeachment complaint filed against an impeachable official in a given year. In their estimation, the complaint that ought to be considered by the House justice committee is the one filed by former Marcos lawyer Oliver Lozano early last July and endorsed by Rep. Rodante Marcoleta. The former PBA presidents stressed that the amended complaint filed by the opposition last July 25 cannot be considered because it is an entirely new complaint, unrecognizable from the Lozano original, since it added many new and substantial issues, and is quite infirm in procedure.

* * *

This one-year bar is the core constitutional issue that the justice committee will tackle, and the growing consensus there seems to be to recognize the Lozano complaint. This issue, as well as the validity of tapes that were illegally acquired under the Anti-Wiretapping Law, will be fiercely debated in the committee. But the first person who ought to uphold this provision of the Constitution should be ex-President Cory Aquino, for it was during her rule that the 1987 Constitution was framed, ratified and promulgated. As a matter of fact, it's always referred to as the "Cory Constitution" and she has been so protective of it, resisting any amendment.

* * *

But now, the opposition to GMA, of which Ms Aquino is a part, is saying that the people cannot find out the "truth" if the Lozano complaint, which is deemed much weaker than the amended complaint, is the one recognized by the committee. There's a lot of effort to appeal to the emotions in that argument, and the majority lawmakers will be portrayed as "suppressing" the truth. But if we start twisting constitutional provisions to suit our desires and intentions, what is going to happen? It will lead to chaos and anarchy. As the former PBA presidents stressed, "There is no alternative to the rule of law except the reign of chaos, confusion and incessant destabilization."

* * *

But why did the opposition file such a lousy original complaint in the first place? Star columnist Ana Marie Pamintuan opined in her column yesterday that "If there had not been a stampede among politicians and lawyers to grab the limelight and take credit for bringing down yet another president, a better impeachment case could have been prepared, and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo could have been brought down faster and easier." She continued: "In kicking out a president, her enemies must avoid further weakening the rule of law. President Arroyo might be booted out, but it cannot be in a way that's so messy we are going to regret for the next 20 years that we have to set another precedent for anarchy." Well said.

Citizens' Impeachment Watch

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

EVEN as Congress debates the many complicated rules and convoluted processes for hearing the impeachment complaint filed against the President, citizens' groups have been formed to monitor the progress (or lack of it) made in determining the validity of the charges raised against Ms Arroyo and the appreciation of the evidence presented.

One of these groups is the Citizens' Impeachment Watch, which claims as its main reason for being the need to "generate the support of the middle class," of groups like professionals, business organizations, and even students, "to steer them toward political action." Founders of Citizens' Impeachment Watch say they are also determined to ensure that "the impeachment case against Ms Arroyo prospers to pave the way for truth and justice"; as well as to "guard the impeachment process by actively lobbying in both Houses of Congress to encourage the legislators to vote according to their conscience and make sure that the process is transparent and will not be soiled by partisan politics."

Citizens' Impeachment Watch, it seems, is born of the puzzling and frustrating indifference of the public to the controversies now swirling about the President. While public opinion polls indicate the majority of the citizenry believes President Arroyo cheated her way to victory in the 2004 polls, we have yet to see an explosion of spontaneous public anger as we did in 1986 and 2001.

Part of the reason is what Impeachment Watch says are the conflicts within the political opposition itself, with "each group…pushing its own agenda and selling its own formula for political change." There is also widespread skepticism that an impeachment charge will ever prosper in the House of Representatives, what with the majority allied with the President's party.

* * *

"CAUGHT in the political crossfire are the so-called middle forces," says Citizens' Impeachment Watch. "Though silent at the moment, majority of them believe that Mrs. Arroyo has lost all moral authority to govern this nation because of allegations of systematic electoral fraud. Although they want Mrs. Arroyo to step down, the middle forces are wary of the discredited group of traditional oppositionists. They view these people as opportunists. They are also cold to the idea of extra-constitutional means for change because such a path might result (in) violence and chaos.

"The Citizens' Impeachment Watch is one avenue wherein the middle forces can exercise their democratic right to participate in the process of change. It can be one vehicle for the mobilization of the middle forces to act now and break their long silence."

Among the activities both ongoing and planned of Citizens' Impeachment Watch are: organizing and establishing links with the middle forces (business, academe, professionals), organizing symposia and fora around the country, lobbying in Congress through letter-writing campaigns and personal meetings with legislators during the impeachment process, putting up "impeachment watchboards" in strategic locations in various parts of the country "to let the public know the status of the impeachment case," including in schools and public markets, and building an online information network, possibly through a website, e-mail alerts and online petitions.

Some 50 people's organizations and nongovernment organizations compose the Citizens' Impeachment Watch, including the National Peace Conference (NPC), Pascres, Pilipina, the student group Akma, the labor group Piglas and Bantay ICT.

* * *

EVER since it got caught up in "Gloriagate"—the maelstrom swirling around the *jueteng* hearings where witnesses have linked people around the President to the illegal numbers game, the wiretapped conversations that indicate the President had conspired to cheat during the last elections, and now the filing of impeachment charges—Congress has all but abandoned its main line of work, which is to introduce and study legislation.

One of the measures waylaid by recent events was the Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act with Rep. Edcel Lagman as main sponsor, which was already reported out of committee and had been set for floor deliberations. This proposed law is actually but the latest version of measures that have been filed in past congresses seeking to enshrine in law a national population policy and guaranteeing reproductive rights to all citizens regardless of the current occupant in Malacañang.

But while Congress dithers on this issue, the province of Aurora has gone ahead and passed a provincial ordinance providing for the "Aurora Reproductive Health Care Code of 2005."

* * *

IT'S really no mystery why Aurora should be showing the way, since the incumbent governor is Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, who during her term as a representative in Congress led many initiatives, including sponsoring very controversial bills ranging from reproductive health rights, divorce, rights of sexual minorities and rights of battered women.

"It is so simply worded and easy to replicate," says Angara-Castillo of the Aurora ordinance, adding that other local governments could easily adapt the measure to their own realities and circumstances by adding or removing certain provisions.

Making the unanimous passage of this groundbreaking ordinance truly astounding is that half of the provincial board members do not even belong to the same party as the governor. So conscious was she about accusations of railroading that the governor kept away from the debates, leaving the steering to Vice Governor Annabel Tangson.

As the governor noted during the ordinance's launch: "With political will, it can be done!"

Some notes on Manila

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

THE EARLY Spanish colonizers and missionaries referred to the entire island of Luzon as Manila, according to Father Colin who attributed that early baptism to the the Chinese. The name referred in the language of the natives to the hammers or mortars that they used to de-husk the rice, the staple food in the entire archipelago. This instrument was carved from a great wooden trunk. In Isla de Manila, they dug into the very center of the wood creating a trough, well carved even on the outside almost like a chalice in shape. The trunk could measure up to five palms in height. The hammer was like a cylindrical walking cane also of wood but solid and heavy, a *vara* (1 vara = .84 meters) and a half in length.

With this, they de-husked the rice, grinding with the wooden hammer in that cavity in such a way that the grain came out cleared of its husk. It was then cleaned in closed sieves called *bilaos* where the rice was tossed and separated from the chaff.

In Isla de los Pintados, they opened two or more holes lengthwise on the trunk rather than vertically so that two or more persons could grind the rice together. Since it was the custom of the Luzones to keep these mortars under their houses or in front on the street may have been the reason strangers called the islands Luzon.

In the elbow of this island facing the southeast, a tumultuous river (would you believe the Pasig?) rushed to the sea and the earth opened into a beautiful bay (Manila's untreated waste wasn't disgorged into it nor did ships dump chemicals and plastic garbage overboard) measuring 30 leagues in its contours. The river descends from a lagoon that is quite large and is six leagues distant from the river bar. On the eastern part of this, the natives had their principal settlement, with up to 4,000 houses along both banks of the river and on the shores of the sea in its bend and where the land ended. At the back of the settlements were many swamps.

In general, it was said that even if the boundaries of its walls and the number of resident Spaniards were not so big, Manila could be considered one of the most important cities of the Indies as a colony and daughter of Mother Spain because of the numerous population composed of various nationalities *extra muros* (outside the walls). It had a silk market (*alcaiceria*) in San Fernando, Binondo, of 6,000 to 8,000 Chinese merchants with different officials and its own mayor. There was another municipality in Tondo with 14 or 15 settlements of Tagalogs as well as other nationalities with their own governor and justice ministers and captains of infantry who lived in the suburbs outside Manila.

Interlaced with these native villages and along the river banks up to the mouth of the lagoon were many pasture lands, vegetable gardens, farms and ranches of Spaniards with more than 2,000 Chinese laborers. A great number of boats traversed the river continually, and the neighborhoods, convents, fields and gardens made it such a pleasure to behold that those who had seen it said it had no equal in the Indies.

Visible from Manila at a distance of three leagues by sea and five or six by land on the southern part was the secluded port of Cavite, a land's end that jutted out to the sea. The natives called it Cauit, which means a hook or anchor, while the Spaniards called it Cavite. It was quite sheltered from the strong southeastern gales that formed the most dangerous storms of the bay. The port was shallow and the galleons could not enter well into it and needed many strong cables. Because of this, they risked being wrecked in port like the two galleons that were ready to leave for Mexico in 1589 which were lost on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

The population of Cavite consisted mainly of soldiers since the presidio with its bulwarks and redoubts was there as well as the arsenal, shipyard and the wharf that served the galleons. The important residents were ship pilots, foremen, crew heads and other galleon officials. There was a parish church and four convents; after Manila, Cavite had the largest Spanish contingent.

Ships could cast anchor anywhere on the bay that was clean, abundant with good fish and lined with thick tree groves.

Fronting Manila, some eight leagues distant toward the middle of the bay was Mariveles, considered a small but elevated isle that served as a lookout. There was a sentinel there who, upon sighting foreign ships, would go out to meet them and send alarm flares to Manila.

Leaving the bay and navigating to the left 14 leagues from Cavite was the cove of Balayan, once known as de Bombon because of the lagoon of the same name at its back. Leaving Balayan and turning toward the east where you entered the cove of Batangas was Punta de Azufre, so called because of the sulphur in its surroundings. In front of the isle of Azufre was another islet called Caza because of the abundance of game; it was uninhabited. Between this isle and the land's end was another port called Malacaban whose name used to conjure sad memories for the Spaniards because in those parts Governor Perez Dasmariñas and his officials were killed by the Chinese crew members on the expedition to recover the fort at Ternate.

(Data from P. Francisco Colin, "Labor Evangelica," 1660, edited by P. Pablo Pastells, 1904)

Still counting stars

YOUNG BLOOD

Hannah Faye M. Muralla

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

WHEN I was younger, I would climb to the roof of our house whenever there was a power interruption in our neighborhood, which was often. As I climbed up the ladder, I would mumble words of disgust with the electric cooperative for being so inefficient. I'd continue to complain as I lay on my back, but once I turned my gaze to the heavens, my mood would change. Evenings without electricity were always the best times to go star-gazing. The darkness and silence that draped the night made the stars twinkle even brighter.

The heavens have always fascinated me. I would spend a lot of time reading books about the constellations during the day and when night came, I would try to locate them in the evening sky: Cassiopeia, Andromeda, the Big Dipper, etc. Sometimes, I would just count every star that was visible to my eyes.

My love for star-gazing began when my father called me and my sisters "Tres Marias." He pointed to a row of three bright stars in the sky and told me they were sometimes called the Tres Marias, too. The three stars, I found out later, composed Orion's Belt in the constellation Orion.

And so began a hobby that I'd do to relieve stress or when I was just plain mad that there was no electricity at a time when I most needed it. On the first year I spent looking up to the heavens, questions began to pop in my head: Were aliens real? What made falling stars fall? Why did they twinkle? What was beyond the dark space? Most importantly, I asked: Who made all these heavenly bodies?

I asked my father, hoping to get clear-cut answers. He told me God made them all.

I pursued the question: Who made God? "No one," he said. "He's God, you know. No one ought to question his authority and power."

"But God doesn't hate you for asking such questions," he hastened to assure me. "Young kids like you tend to ask questions a lot."

I persisted: "How can it be that the universe just came to be? Did God just appear, too?"

"In time, you'll understand. You just have to have faith," my father replied, smiling.

Faith is such a vague word. We say to see is to believe, but faith requires you to believe even without seeing. And for a young child like me then, faith was hard to understand.

But I didn't have to wait too long. As soon as I entered school, science began to teach me a lot of things about the world I didn't fully understand and the faith I was trying to fathom. Pre-school saw me grow my first plant and identify its parts. Elementary school taught me all about the human body and the flora and fauna of the earth. High school made a little clearer to me the world I lived, with my Physics, Chemistry and Science Research subjects. I was introduced to the universe further, learning the physical laws that governed it. Thirteen years of school prior to college required me to learn and understand the concepts and processes involved in sustaining life. I had to learn more than stoichiometry and thermodynamics in an attempt to understand life and the laws of the universe. And whenever I learned something new and fascinating, I was awed and then I would say to myself, "So that's how God does it! Wow."

It's most amazing that the world and the universe operate by a certain logic that is unmistakably similar and consistent. The more we learn of something, the more we appreciate the powerful intelligence behind the many wonderful designs and functions that benefit humanity and the rest of creation. Faith comes at a much later time, when we've been enlightened and we acknowledge what we still don't know and cannot do as mere humans.

In college, we are taught things at a higher level and encouraged to gain a more profound understanding of our existence. I have realized that faith doesn't need to be blind. Faith doesn't even require us to believe without seeing with our eyes at all. God reveals Himself in all creation—on land, on sea, and in the heavens and beyond. God reveals Himself both in the simplest and most complex of creations.

Questions I previously asked, like why a falling star falls or why stars twinkle, have been answered. As to the existence of aliens, I'm still not sure and all the more is my uncertainty as to what goes beyond the outer space. But ask me any time who made the universe and I can answer you with conviction. Science may have not opened the last window of creation yet (as depicted in the film "The Creation of the Universe"), but I believe that the billions of years' worth of evidence (and the future discoveries to come) all point to an intelligence beyond human comprehension.

At times, I also ask why humans feel the want and the need to know things. It may be that we were hard-wired to be curious beings who are also intelligent enough to find answers to our own questions, though not all the time. After all, we were made in the image of the Creator who's behind all these wonder. But since we are mere mortals, we could never be all-knowing like Him. Gaining the profoundest knowledge of everything would be quite impossible. My father was right: we were not meant to understand all things. Sometimes, you just have to have faith.

Last summer, free from the pressures of school, I once again looked up to the heavens at night and I wished upon a falling star that I may never be deprived of star-gazing and that I would continue to appreciate every spectacle I see and deepen my faith further in the One who made them all possible.

And just like what I did in my younger and more carefree days, I looked up to the heavens and attempted to count the stars that twinkled brightly. I kept counting even though I knew that I could never count them all in one sitting, just like the questions that I kept asking them although I knew that most of them would never be answered in a lifetime.

I will continue to counting stars at night—for the fun and beauty of it, and because it enriches my faith.

Hannah Faye M. Muralla, 18, is a third year AB Communication student at Ateneo de Manila University.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please address it to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address and information about your age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with.

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Coco 'loco' compromises

SOMETHING is again gravely amiss with he efforts to recover the coco levy funds. After a series of court decisions favoring he coconut farmers, the government, hrough the Presidential Commission on Good Government, now appears to be aying the ground for yet another out-of-court settlement.

In 2001, Davao Archbishop Fernando apalla and a farmers' group, called Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Samahang Magsasaka at Manggagawa sa Niyugan PKSMMN), initiated a compromise set-ement with Danding Cojuangco. The at-empted settlement fizzled out after the upreme Court ruled that coco levy funds re prima facie public funds. The Sandianbayan followed with several decisions eclaring the government and coconut armers as the rightful owners of coco evy-funded assets.

Today, the same group is again con-ucting mock farmer consultations, left nd right, in coconut-producing rovinces of the country. The said consul-ations are pre-designed to project that he coco levy cases in the courts are oomed to infinity and, therefore, an out-f-court settlement is the only choice for oconut farmers. Ironically, no less than CGG Chair Camilo Sabio and other gov-rnment agency officials are leading the ack in this campaign. The biggest irony, owever, is that the out-of-court settle-ment offer involves the 27 percent CIIF-MC shares which the Sandiganbayan uled in 2004 as held in trust by the gov-rnment for all coconut farmers.

Coconut farmers have long been waiting to benefit from the coco levy funds. The Sandiganbayan, in the case of the CIIF-SMC block, emphasized that it is they who should benefit from the levy. So why offer an out-of-court settlement at this point in time? Where is the offer coming from?

Coconut farmers believe that the reason for this move is political. The President is facing a serious political crisis brought about by the Gloriagate scandal. And Danding Cojuangco still has influence over a considerable block in Congress that could swing the vote on the impeachment and Charter change. This perception further diminishes the citizens' trust in this ailing administration.

Politics should never toy around with social justice issues, especially when they affect a big sector of our society—in this case, the millions of impoverished coconut farmers and their families which comprise almost a third of the population.

—LIZA C. CONDINO,
Program Officer 2,
Coconut Industry Reform
Movement Inc., 84 Masikap Ext., Brgy.
Central, Diliman, Quezon City

Please recall Philreca official's appointment to NEA board,

WITH THE RECENT appointment of Mr. Wilfred Billena to the National Electrification Administration board of administra-ors, we cannot help but think of the lead-ership structure and hierarchy of that Government institution.

While we do not question the integrity f Mr. Billena—who is still the general manager of the Iloilo Electric Cooperative nc. and concurrent president of the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (Philreca), an organization of eneral managers (GMs) and directors of lectric cooperatives (ECs)—we are afraid that he will favor and protect any officer of an electric cooperative who may be the subject of an administrative com-laint by any EC member-consumer.

This apprehension is based on our ex-erience with former Mr. Francisco Silva, when he was still the NEA administrator. He was the GM of three electric coopera-ves in Cebu prior to his appointment as NEA administrator in 2001; and he was romoted immediately prior to the 2004 lections as Presidential Adviser (PA) for ural Electrification with the rank of secretary.

During his term as NEA administrator, NEA undertook a management and finan-ial audit for 2001-2003 of all the 114 ECs nder it. The audit report revealed so many irregularities committed by EC officials. Sadly, despite these findings, NEA did nothing to penalize those EC officers. Thus, we cannot blame the Castillejos Consumers Association (Cascona) when it filed with the Office of the Ombudsman, a case of estafa and violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act against former NEA administrator Francisco Silva and many other NEA officials for failing to exercise their duties and responsibilities as the supervising and controlling agency of the ECs.

For this reason, we are asking Ms Arroyo to recall the appointment of Mr. Billena so as to ensure the independence, objectivity and impartiality of the NEA board of administrators.

We welcome, instead, the appointment of people with unblemished reputations, including those formerly with the Department of Energy. These people, we believe, will be able to transform the NEA board of administrators into an independent, objective and impartial body. This is aside from the fact that they are very familiar with the essentials of a successful rural electrification program.

—PETE L. ILAGAN,
president,
National Association of Electricity
Consumers for Reforms, No. 10 Bayside
Court Compound, 680 Quirino Ave.,
Tambo, Parañaque City

A prayer for righteous leaders

THANK Ceres Doyo for writing an arti-le about the late Sen. Raul Roco. It is in-eed unfortunate that we look back at a man's accomplishments only upon his eath. Raul Roco was the best choice for resident in the last elections. Sadly the resent generation of Filipino voters ave lost their ability to select the best ualified candidate and opt for actors nd TV personalities or ineffective in-umbents.

History tells us that we are capable of hoosing good leaders (e.g. Ramon Magsaysay, Carlos Garcia, Fidel Ramos, etc.) but we are now either blinded by hunger (succumbing to selling our votes), or we simply lack political maturity while our tolerance for corruption and political manipulations is rising to higher levels. I pray that someday the leaders we choose will be better. I hope that God will allow righteous leaders to lead our country again.

—JERICHO L. REMITIO,
Las Vegas, NV,
jerichor@hotmail.com

TRUCKS loaded with logs wait for the truck ban to expire.

Overloaded trucks on SLEX

DRIVING northward along the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) from Lipa, Batangas last weekend, I chanced upon several huge trailer trucks carrying heavy loads such as logs, steel bars, stones, gravel and sand, etc. Their cargoes were precariously loaded. With each truck carrying several tons of cargoes, we could only guess if their loads would spill onto the road or other vehicles at certain speeds or sudden turns. I did not see any PNCC people checking the trucks for overloading.

There is a law against overloading, and if this is implemented properly and regularly, then the highways and expressways will be safe for travel for all. (I hope the operators of the SLEX will perform their duties and make sure they use the proper equipment to monitor overloading on the tollway.) The law should be implemented not just in expressways but also in all our roads nationwide.

—SUZETTE RODRIGUEZ,
Better Living Subdivision,
Parañaque City

The environment in our hands

THERE is growing concern over the stability of the existing political leadership in the Philippines. However, we must also keep in mind that there are other concerns that affect Filipinos and the rest of mankind as seriously, or even more.

The effects of the earth's ailing environment may not be immediately noticeable, but they are certainly spreading like a plague that may soon prove to be too lethal.

The little things that people, Filipinos included, take for granted, such as smoking and throwing wrappers, cans and bottles wherever they feel like doing them, have created a major national and global problem that is not just gradually killing our environment but is also threatening the very people tasked to be the stewards of this earth.

I think it is important for Filipinos to be aware of our surroundings and how to protect our environment. In order for us to live with clean air around us, and with fresh water and fertile land to fill our hunger and thirst, we each have to do our part. Have your cars tuned up regularly. Penalize smoke-belching buses and other public utility vehicles. Segregate and dispose of trash properly. Reuse and recycle plastic and glass containers. Doing these simple things will make a positive and huge contribution in our quest to ease the long-standing problem of pollution.

By uniting and cooperating, we do not just help ourselves; we also help everyone around us. No matter what race, color or nationality we have, this is still one earth in which we live. We have no one else to turn to if we must save the one planet we have been blessed with. And there is no one else to blame if we just passively stand around and wait for the earth's demise.

—MIGUEL R. ROCHA,
c/o asreyes@globetel.com.ph

No such DENR warning

THIS is in reaction to a news item titled "DENR warns Naga City unfit for tall buildings." (PDI, 6/23/05) There is no truth to the news story, specifically, the information that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has categorically classified Naga City as "unfit for tall buildings."

No less than the regional director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the DENR, Reynulfo A. San Juan, has clarified that: "The gist of our IEC [information, education, communications] campaign is to inform the LGUs to be aware and prepare for the occurrence of flooding hazards within the Bicol River Basin since it experiences perennial seasonal flooding. It is our official position that any infra development should consider the result of technical studies such as geohazard assessment and soil or foundation studies. No categorical statement was made on whether there is a limit to the height of construction of buildings since this will depend on the results of specific studies."

I hope this clarification once and for all corrects whatever wrong information the news story may have impressed on the residents, businessmen and prospective investors of Naga. We are concerned that the story might have adversely affected the economic prospects of the city as an up-and-coming, business-friendly metropolis in Southern Luzon.

—JESSE M. ROBREDO,
mayor, Naga City

I STAND by my story. MGB director Rey San Juan confirmed the warning in a cell phone interview.

The geo-hazard map showing areas susceptible to "liquefaction" and the details of the information were provided by Ernesto Elcamel, Naga City Disaster Management Project head, who said they were briefed by the MGB on the danger. The other source was a study on hazard flooding that the Philippine Business for Social Progress did during the time of former Mayor Sulpicio Roco Jr.

—JUAN ESCANDOR JR.,
correspondent,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Recto's unfinished crusade

THE INQUIRER August 7 editorial, "Sense of the possible," which bracketed Claro M. Recto with Raul Manglapus and Jovito Salonga, was unfair to Claro M. Recto.

Claro M. Recto exemplified an uncompromising sense of nation on the great issues of his time—the Bell Trade Act, the Parity Amendment, Laurel-Langley Act, the US Bases, Filipino First, industrialization, the Rizal course, etc.—something which cannot be said of Manglapus and Salonga. Salonga presided over the Senate and voted for the expulsion of the US bases, but his sense of nation on the bases issue has never informed his position on the economy. On the other hand, Manglapus' Philippines was basically compatible with US neocolonial policies.

Like Bonifacio's unfinished revolution, Recto's Filipino First crusade is still unfinished.

—AMADO GAT INCIONG,
Unit 301 Union Square Condominium,
145 15th Avenue,
Cubao, Quezon City

Do you think that some witnesses in the jueteng investigation are being paid off or threatened to keep quiet?

Absolutely, yes, the arroyo administration will do whatever it takes to remain in power. money or death survey please Ü
—Bernard Dujali, *Panabo City*

i think YES lyk MR. ZUCE itsura palang bayaran mag sabi lang ng LIE!
—yuri guiapar, 24, *cotabato city*

most likely. events like this are seen in d movies..
—rosine c. rivera

as d leaders of our country lost der integrity, so as those witnesses in d jueteng investigation. dis sends a strong signal..
—louie chin, 34, *cavite city*

d mere fact dat dis isnt new 2 us is tiring! aftr Erap, Gma, who's next? dis country won't have another Ninoy cos d 1 man hu shud is dead. ROCO.
—tes obana, 24, *polangui*

Yes, they are being threatened to keep quiet or else something wil happen to their family, then pay-off cOmes. Asa k pa?
—gerry e. Gamez, 39, *sampaloc, manila*

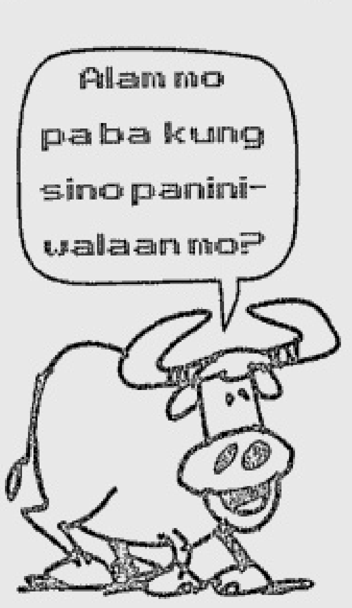
Do you believe Capt. Marlon Mendoza's claim that "Garci" said that President Arroyo received P300M from suspected jueteng lord Bong Pineda for the elections?

Impossible. H HR C. HE jas HEARD IT. I can't believe him..
—JOSE ENSOMO, 43, *SURIGAO city*

considering mendoza took d biggest risk of his life 2 claim such wc turnd out 2b d most explosive part of his testimony, big YES!
—rob ocampo, 45, *baguio city*

Yes. Pero wa epek sinabi nya, d sya sing-"bigat" ni Zuce. Lasing kc kmi nun nina garsi kya pati parti ko nwala. Statement 4 sale!
—Mics Obles, 29, *Baguio City*

hindi totoo yan! She is a family friend of bong nd lilia pineda, baka naman 3B, not 300M, started wen she ran as SENATOR!
—mando rugas, 43, *davao city*


Alam mo paba kung sino panini-ualaan mo?

i believe garci reli sed dat 2 convince oder comelec officials dat dis prtcular crime does pay, n pays big courtesy of GMA
—rob ocampo, 45, *baguio city*

no. Mendoza should have said it a long time ago, not now... when being a witness is a "profession".
–divina lopez, *davao city*

nani2wala k kay capt. mendoza. ndi naman n k-taka2 ang mga yan, ga2win nman n GMA ang lahat ma-ensure lng knyang 2nd term
—bryan balolong

I DO, because SHE HAD DONE IT B4 way back when SHE RUN 4 VICE PRES MONEY was gvn to her in resort in BATAAN.
—VIRGINIA, 48, *SJDM, BUL*

No. It is purely hearsay, it would not even be admissible in court.
—mila cajote, 58, *cavite*

Do you support calls for the president's impeachment?

yes, she is liar, a cheater, why call garci to protect her vote in mindanao, when she knew garci was assigned other region
—james dayao, 50, *hagonoy*

Yes, giving her a chance due 2 & "hello garci tape" is a way we only tolerate her mistakes. She must pay 4 it.
—Lariza Estrevillo, 22, *General Santos City*

NO, the opposition groups are just orchestrating all these noisy moves against the Arroyo administration.
—Ceasar, *Manila*

yes, LAMPASUHIN nlng clang lahat pra TUMAHIMIK na ang isyo.
—Joel Quintela, *Tagum City*

Yes ULIT!
—junnie vee d. hongco, 17, *iloilo*

To teach people not to idolize money, but idolize ur good character.
—Eli Barrido, 67, *Panabo city*

YES!, I SUPPORT d IMPEACHMENT of PGMA, OL the WAY.
—WILLIAM Tan, 36, *CAUAYAN city*

yes, its d only legal way 2 oust PGMA, besides I can even donate a modest amount 2 pursue d impeachment cause.
—gerry singson, *vigan city*

O kay kini ang legal n sulondon sa pagpatanggal sa pangulo nga ang kredibilidad wala na.
—Cassel R. Dujali, *panabo city*

Yes, if d opposition have credible evidence. If none wats d use? sayang ang oras.
—Rafael de Vera, 59, *marikina city*

i support d moves 2 impeach d president so we Filipinos would know d truth & justice still prevails in our country.
—Robert Campos, 50, *Dagupan City*

The PRESIDENT is DOING FINE, I WON'T SUPPORT impeachment, LET her FINISH HER TERM.
—Romy D. Robiego, 50, *QC*

Opinion

Who is playing us? So now I ask all those people who want the president's head and who have prejudged her guilt based on illegally acquired (wiretapped) evidence, don't you think you are being played by people who released this tape? Or maybe it was your side that released the tape. May I add also, why only now?
Who is playing us? What is your motive for doing this? If the answer to that is some patriotic cliché' that "I'm doing this for the country." My answer to that is, "I have heard that line before." I am frustratingly disgusted with Philippine politics.
—May R. Vicencio

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100 more soldiers deployed to Samar

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—About 100 soldiers in Southern Leyte will be deployed to Samar Island to help fight communist insurgents in the three Samar provinces.

Major Gen. Jovito Palparan, commanding chief of the 8th Infantry Division, said the additional number of soldiers would come from the 43rd Infantry Battalion based in Sogod town, Southern Leyte.

"This will help further in our campaign against the enemy. I am committed to end the insurgency problem on the (Samar) island," he said, reiterating his earlier promise to end insurgency in Eastern Visayas within the year.

He, however, did not say when these soldiers, under Col. Raul Farnacio, would be reassigned to Samar Island, which is composed of the provinces of Samar, Northern Samar and Eastern Samar.

The impending deployment of the troops to Southern Leyte would be the second in two months.

Last June, Palparan welcomed the more than 400 soldiers from Bohol who were deployed to Basey town, Samar under the command of Lt. Col. Manuel Ramos.

Roberto de Castro, Bayan Muna deputy secretary general, dismissed the deployment of troops from Southern Leyte to Samar Island, saying this would not stop insurgency in the region.

He said that even if Palparan brought in the entire Armed Forces of Philippines to Eastern Visayas, the insurgency would remain in the region, particularly the Samar provinces, unless the government addressed the problem on poverty.

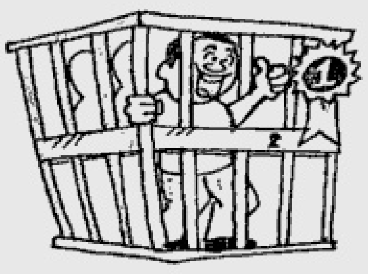
"This will not help end the insurgency problem in these areas. In fact, government troops in the region outnumber those who are members of the New People's Army and yet Palparan and his men are still in a quandary how to crush them," De Castro said.

ROUNDUP

Dengue strikes in Zambales

IBA, Zambales—Two persons have died of dengue while 176 others have been hospitalized in three towns since July this year, health officials said. Dr. Raulin Dadural, provincial health officer, identified the fatalities as Josias Mortil, 7, and Foniel Mirador, 21, both from Sta. Cruz town. Mortil died on Aug. 3 while Mirador died on July 7. Dadural said Sta. Cruz has 78 cases, Candelaria, 80, and Masinloc, 18. Officials said 608 malaria cases have been recorded in the province in the last 30 weeks this year.
Cesar Villa, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Best district jail



PAGBILAO, Quezon—The Quezon district jail in Barangay Talipan in this town was chosen as the "Best District Jail of the Year" during the recent 14th anniversary celebration of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology. Jail warden Senior Insp. Randel Latoza was also awarded "Junior Officer of the Year" during the same occasion, besting 15 regional wardens across the country. The BJMP recognized Latoza's efforts to provide the 550 inmates humane conditions while in detention. Notable was the improvement done in the receiving and visiting areas of the inmates. The jail warden was also able to secure a total of 60 steel head bunks for the use of the prisoners. He also provided several livelihood opportunities. Latoza also sees to it that the jail inmates are being regularly briefed by their lawyers from the Provincial Attorney's Office.
Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Woman robbed, killed

CAMP GEN. ALEJO SANTOS, Bulacan—A 68-year-old woman was stabbed and killed by robbers who barged into her house in Malolos City on Saturday. Police said Monica Dimagiba, a dealer of herbal medicines, was found dead by her relatives and neighbors in her house in Barangay Balite. Police said the suspects attacked the victim at around noon Saturday and took her money and other valuables. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Quezon trader robbed

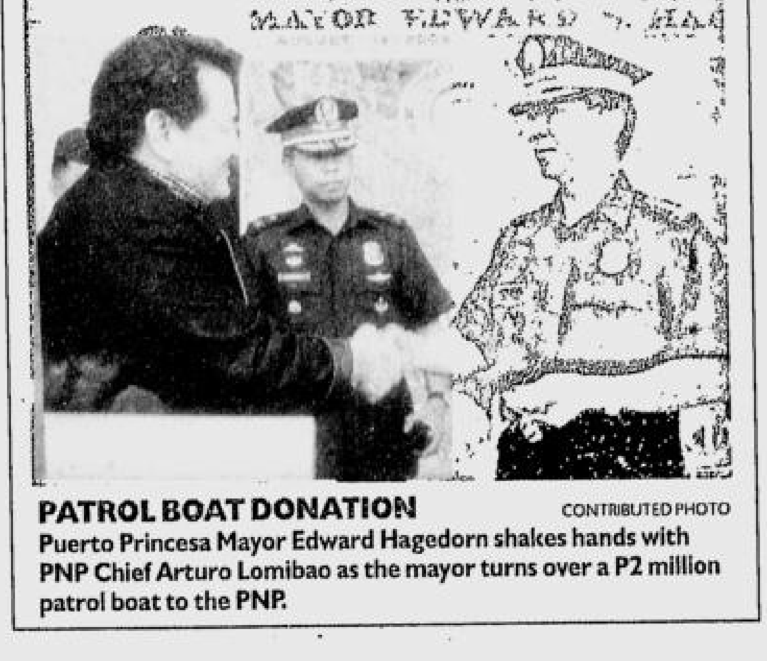
LUCENA CITY—A Quezon businessman-contractor was robbed by two unidentified suspects on Friday morning, a police report said. Victim Claro Jose, 66, a resident of Lucena City, was in his Toyota Revo when motorcycle-riding suspects blocked the vehicle at the corner of Rizal and Allarey Streets. The robbers forcibly opened the victim's vehicle and grabbed his bag containing P300,000. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Group opposes tollway rehab

LEADERS of communities south of Metro Manila urged Congress to go slow on the plan to modernize the South Luzon Expressway at no cost to the government and first study who would foot the bill. Ray Junia, head of the Road Users Protection Advocates (Rupa), an association of groups and individuals opposed to excessive and unreasonable toll, said in a statement Congress should do a reality check because residents of Southern Luzon will bleed in the next 25 years to pay a potentially overpriced tollways "not unlike the costing of the Skyway system that we have questioned in court."

Illegal logs seized

REAL, Quezon—Elements of the 414th Police Mobile Group manning a checkpoint in Barangay Kiloloron in this town intercepted on Thursday afternoon undocumented 1,500 board feet of newly sawn red lauaan aboard a six-wheel truck and arrested four suspected illegal loggers. Supt. Pablito Duron, 414th PMG chief, identified the suspects as Jose Acta, Raul Ponce, Ariel Mendoza and Eladio Peret—all of Mabitac, Laguna. The truck was registered under the name of the local government of Mabitac.
Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



PATROL BOAT DONATION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn shakes hands with PNP Chief Arturo Lomibao as the mayor turns over a P2 million patrol boat to the PNP.

Protect burial ground of vets, gov't urged

BAGUIO CITY—These were the playgrounds of the infamous "White Lady" of Baguio. Especially these times when Loakan Road is dark and foggy, residents and taxi drivers would swear to see this quite legendary apparition by the road near the Camp John Hay Cemetery I and II along Loakan Road.

And who wouldn't? The neat rows of white crosses and the pine trees would make for a menacing backdrop.

Now, these cemeteries are helpless against metal scavengers, as about 200 of the 400 steel crosses there have been stolen.

Buried in these cemeteries were Filipino and American Scouts and United States Army servicemen who died during World Wars I and II.

Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion Auxiliary-Philippines are asking the city government to protect the remaining crosses.

Vice Mayor Peter Ray Bautista said he would also ask the assistance of the American government since these cemeteries should be protected under the Joint US Military Assistance Group to the Republic of the Philippines (Jusmag) to help the city government secure the areas and replace the steel crosses there.

"These areas are parts of the city's history. They should not be desecrated," said Bautista.

Angel Villaralbo, a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and who served during the Vietnam War, said his group is planning to replace the crosses but they wanted them protected.

He said the theft happened only in recent years.

The group is also planning to replace the gate and fence so cattle (which graze in the area) and thieves would not enter the cemeteries.

Villaralbo, who has two relatives buried in the John Hay Cemetery, said there was no caretaker for both cemeteries and only relatives and fellow soldiers clear and secure the areas. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Slain judge's kin losing hope on case

MATI, Davao Oriental—It has been more than three years since Judge Eugenio Valles of the Regional Trial Court Branch 11 in Nabunturan, Compostela Valley was assassinated but authorities continue to be clueless as to who masterminded his murder.

"I think there is no hope already, we no longer expect to get justice for the assassination of Genny given the rotten and hopeless justice system in the country," former Davao Oriental Gov. Cirillo Valles said of his brother's death.

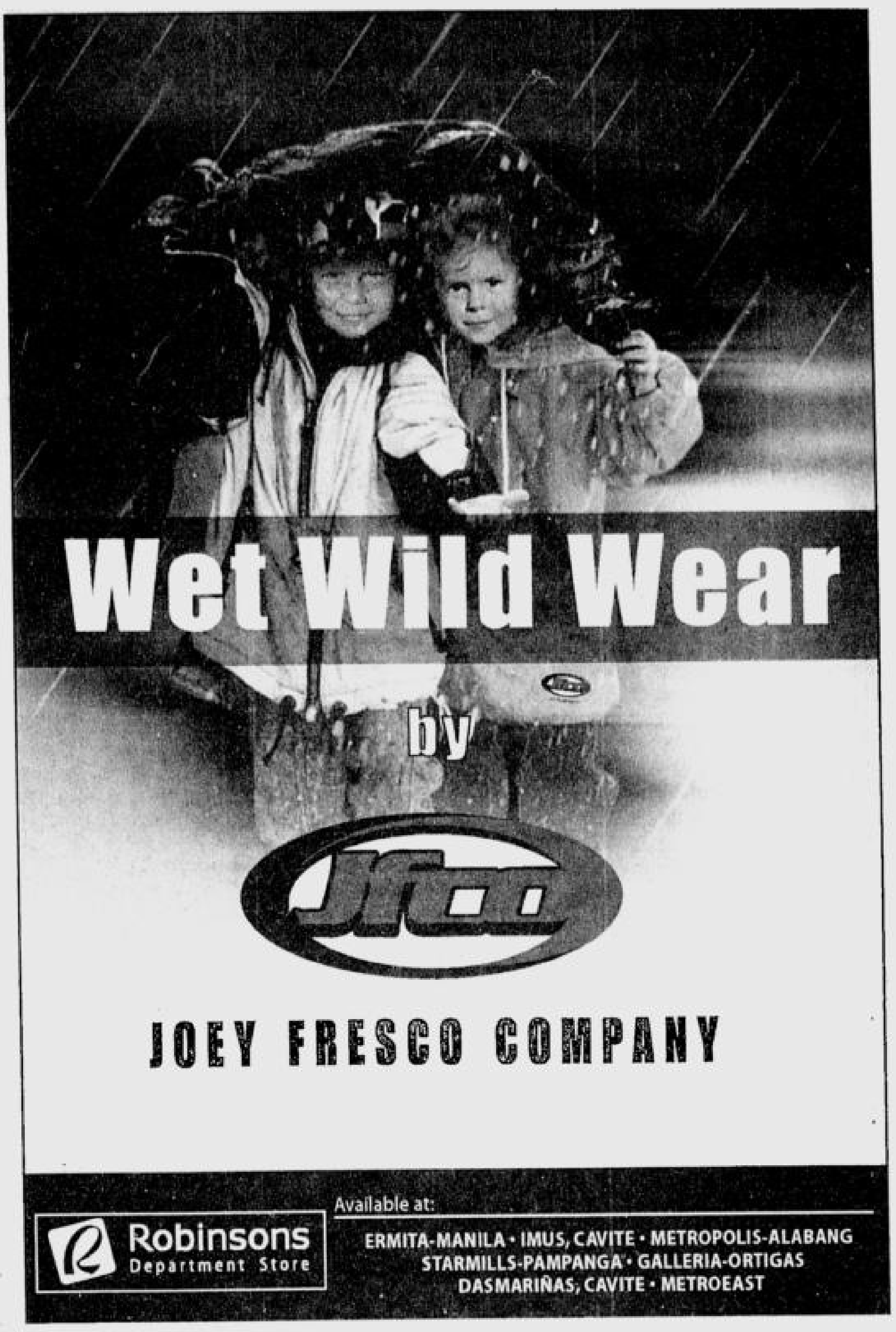
He said the family has accepted the fact that the judge's death became "part of the statistics of unsolved murders in this country."

Judge Valles was gunned down by still unidentified gunmen on April 25, 2002 while he was jogging in Purok 7 in Barangay Santa Maria, also in Nabunturan.

He died from five gunshot wounds in the head.

Prior to his death, Valles was dragged into the mining conflict in Mt. Diwata in Monkayo town after he rejected a petition by small-scale miners for a temporary restraining order on a cease-and-desist order issued by former Monkayo Mayor Joel Brillantes against mining operations in the area.

"We believe that it will no longer be solved as it was a very well-planned assassination that involved the powerful people of Compostela Valley province. As you can see, no one has been charged," the former governor said of his brother's assassination. *Ferdinand Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*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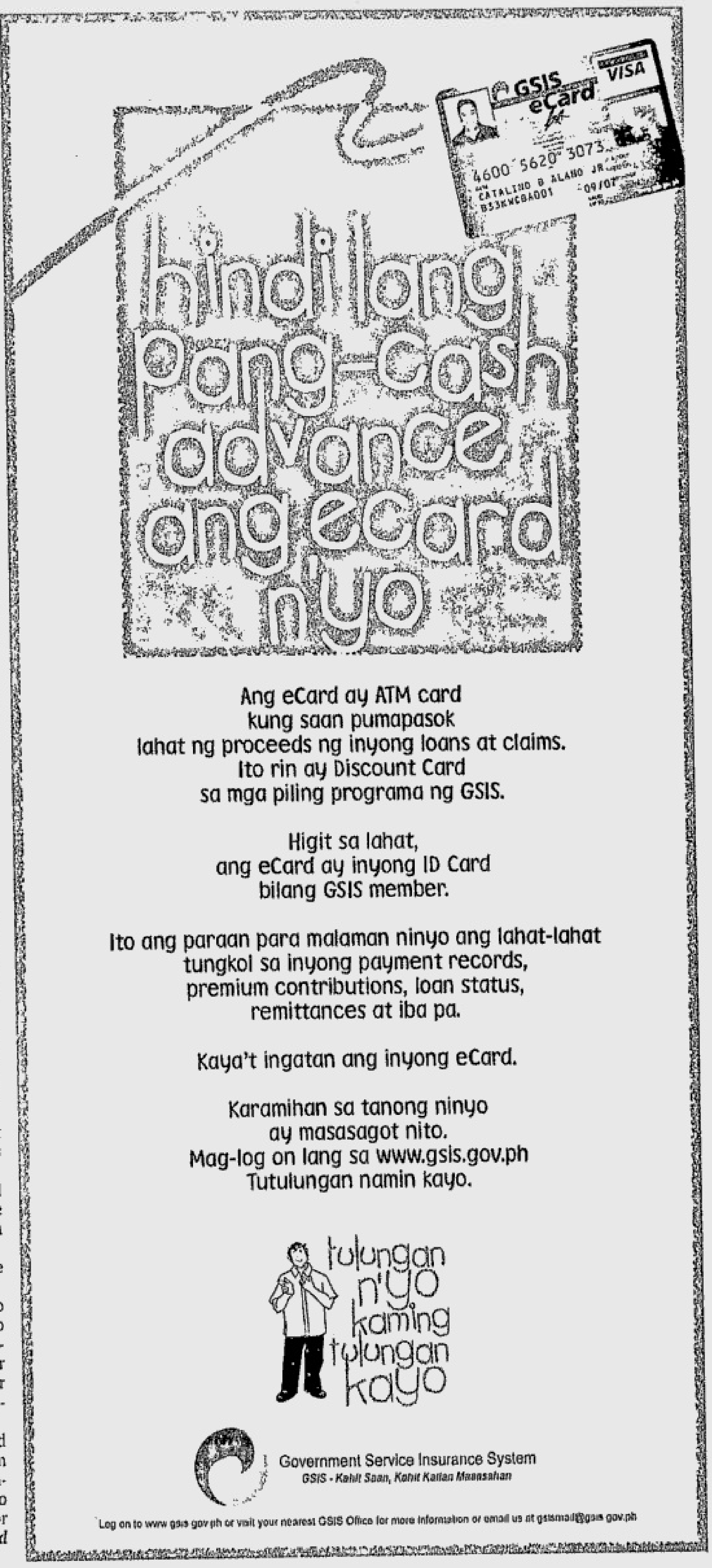
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Cavite politics reaches court as gov sues vice gov for graft

CALAMBA CITY—The political play in Cavite has suddenly turned into a battle in judicial courts.

Gov. Erineo "Ayong" Maliksi said he had filed graft and corruption charges before the Ombudsman against his erstwhile ally, Vice Gov. Johnvic Remulla, for the alleged anomalous P100-million computerization project of the provincial government more than four years ago.

The case was filed on June 6, a month before Remulla filed a similar case of graft and corruption against Maliksi for the supposed "ghost purchase" of P7.5 million worth of rice last year.

Also named respondents in the case filed by Maliksi were five officers of leading US-based computer firm Hewlett-Packard and six officials of Northgate Technologies Inc., a local supplier of computers that won the project.

REMULLA

No bidding

Maliksi's complaint stemmed from the supposed questionable transaction involving the acquisition of 136 computer units for the computerization of the revenue collection system of the provincial government.

He said the project was given to NTI for a whopping contract price of P99.98 million even without public bidding and approval of the provincial council.

The project, known as the Cavite Government Electronic Management System, was formulated through Executive Order 08-200 issued by then Gov. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. and Remulla.

Revilla, now a senator, ran for reelection in 2001 but eventually lost to Maliksi.

In his 12-page complaint, Maliksi accused Remulla and the other respondents of conspiring with each other to railroad the deal.

COA report

He said a report of the Commission on Audit on July 5, 2002, revealed that the entire project was overpriced by 47 percent, or more than P25 million.

The governor said he did not intend for media to pick up the story "because I don't want to do the things (Remulla) has been doing."

"(Remulla) has caused me a lot of troubles by putting me on trial by publicity (after feeding the media of the cases he filed against me). He's really determined to ruin my reputation and get me suspended so he can take over as governor," Maliksi told the INQUIRER.

Remulla, however, quickly branded Maliksi's allegations as "a mere political exercise."

He said the case against him was "too shallow."

He likewise questioned Maliksi's decision not to include Revilla in the case.

"Why didn't he include Senator Revilla in the case? I never really participated in any negotiations regarding that project. I was just a witness in the transaction. It was (Revilla) who had a hand in the project," Remulla said in a mobile phone interview.

Accusing finger

Maliksi retorted that it was Remulla, not Revilla, who manipulated the entire bidding process and the agreement itself.

Aside from failing to secure the authorization of the provincial council, a report submitted on Oct. 3, 2001, by provincial auditor Flordelisa Torio noted that the transaction violated a circular issued by then President Joseph Estrada.

The circular, issued on Aug. 25, 1998, directed all government units to first seek clearance from the Office of the President before implementing projects worth more than P50 million.

Maliksi said the same COA report noticed that the project violated 17 other provisions of the law on public bidding.

He said the computer units were already delivered a month before NTI won the bid for the project.

Documents showed that it was Remulla himself who received the computers.

Can't remember

Asked why the delivery was ahead of the supposed bidding date, Remulla replied: "I really don't remember when was that. What I can say is that I only did my ministerial duty to receive the deliveries."

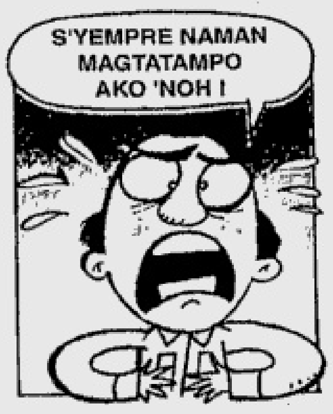
Because of the violations, Maliksi had already ordered a stop in the payment for the P75.5-million balance of the project.

Maliksi has accused Malacañang of orchestrating his ouster in order to win a deal with two Remullas—Gilbert and Crispin—who are members of Congress for their support in a bid to stop the impeachment case in the House of Representatives.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Negros Oriental pols make mountain out of molehill over letter

By Felipe V. Celino
PDI Visayas Bureau


S'YEMPRE NAMAN MAGTATAMPO AKO 'NOH !

ROXAS CITY—An "undelivered" invitation letter has threatened to break up the political unity and cooperation between the Capitol and City Hall.

Mayor Antonio del Rosario demanded an explanation from the Capitol as to why he was not invited during the State of the Province Address (Sopa) of Gov. Vicente Bermejo on Aug. 9.

The mayor wanted to know why Vice Mayor Alan Celino, a member of the opposition, was invited while he, a political ally, was not.

Del Rosario said he did not give much importance to his presence at the governor's Sopa because he would be merely one of the spectators. But he said he was greatly insulted that Celino was there.

Bermejo and Del Rosario are original leaders of the Liberal Party (LP) in Capiz. The governor is the LP provincial chair while the mayor is the city chair.

Almost all the mayors and vice mayors in the province, as well as Capiz Rep. Rodriguez Dadivas (first district), showed up during the Sopa. Selected barangay officials and guests from the private sector were there.

Provincial administrator Dante Bermejo, the governor's nephew, said he gave the mayor's invitation letter to Alger Inocencio, senior city tourism officer, when Inocencio passed by the governor's office, about three days before the Sopa.

The provincial capitol is about 50 meters from City Hall.

Dante said two female employees of the governor's office witnessed Inocencio's receipt of the letter.

Inocencio, however, strongly denied Dante's claim, saying what he got from the governor's office was a newsletter addressed to him.

He said his letters were sometimes mistakenly addressed to the Capitol because he was formerly employed at the governor's office during the time of former Gov. Esteban Contreras.

He urged the governor's office to prove that he was the one who hand-carried the invitation.

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INQUIRER

INQBOX Question of the Week

In the wake of higher oil prices, in what specific ways can you help conserve energy?

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EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

WORKING FEET
These Bontoc women in traditional garb warm up for a ritual dance on concrete. Modern lifestyles and technology have taken away their cultural environment, but their rituals continue to adjust to the changes.

Public warned of new modus operandi using fake checks of GSIS

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

MAASIN CITY—The Government Service Insurance Services has warned the public against fake GSIS checks after owners of a furniture shop here became the latest victims of a modus operandi involving the checks.

Francisco Ang and his wife Tita, owners of Tita's gift shop, said two men went to their shop in the morning of Aug. 6 and asked if they could purchase some items using their GSIS checks.

They identified themselves as Ramon Rosales and Paulo Magat and claimed that they were from Malitbog town, about 45 km south of here.

They alleged that they were the payees of two checks worth P44,410, which came from their salary loan from the GSIS.

One check was dated July 26, 2005, valued at P25,800 while the other was issued on July 22, 2005 and was worth P18,610.

The couple agreed. The two then endorsed the two checks and wrote down their addresses and mobile phone numbers at the back of these checks.

They then bought some items worth P23,000. The couple gave the two P21,410 in cash as change for their P44,410.

The two men, however, did not take the items with them when they rode in their motorcycle. Instead, they told the Angs that they would come back as soon as they could find a vehicle to transport their purchases.

The two, however, did not return to the furniture shop. The couple repeatedly called the cellular phone numbers listed at back of the checks but there was no reply.

The couple became suspicious and they called a nearby GSIS office to inquire about the checks.

Fortunately, the cashier was at the GSIS office, said Socrates Maderazo, GSIS-Maasin legal counsel.

He said the checks looked real because it appeared to be complete with proper markings and name of the signatories.

But when the cashier held the checks, she noticed these were fake because the paper was thin compared to the genuine checks.

Cops gun down ex-soldier who ran amuck

BACOLOD CITY—Police shot dead a dismissed Army soldier on Sunday after he ran amuck and killed a policeman in Hinigaran town, Negros Occidental.

The fatalities were identified as Salvador Pedregosa, former Scout Ranger assigned in Tarlac; and SPO1 Nicasio Vecido, a member of the 3rd Provincial Mobile Group (PMG).

Police said Pedregosa entered the guardhouse of the 3rd PMG in Barangay San Roque, Hinigaran, about 54 km south of here, at about 3 a.m. on Sunday.

The suspect then stabbed Vecido in the head without any provocation and took the victim's M-16 assault rifle, the police said.

He also shot Vecido in the chest before flagging down a Fuso Canter truck driven by Eduardo Mugdan. He alighted at the vicinity of Tanulo Bridge in Barangay Pilar, Hinigaran.

Senior Supt. Charles Calima, provincial police director, said Pedregosa shot the house of Army Sgt. Rodney Grande of the 66th Infantry Battalion in Sultan Kudarat who was in his home on vacation at that time. Nobody was injured.

Grande reported the incident to the Binalbagan Police Station, which was nearer to his home.

Binalbagan policemen immediately responded but their patrol car was shot by the suspect, hitting the right door.

Insp. Regidor Alvarado, Hinigaran police chief, said the suspect went inside a parked Ceres Bus Liner and demanded the keys from driver Victorino Cordero.

He said Pedregosa was able to grab the keys from Cordero only to throw it back to the driver.

Pedregosa was later gunned down by SPO1 Ernesto Muela during pursuit operations in Barangay Pilar.

According to Alvarado, Pedregosa was depressed due to financial problems. He went to Grande, a relative, believing that the soldier hid his wife and children after they left their home in Barangay Pilar when he began acting strange, the police chief said. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Separate holding of local, nat'l polls sought

MARAWI CITY—An amendment to the Constitution seeking to de-synchronize national and local elections is imperative to keep the country's electoral exercises more manageable and orderly.

Commission on Elections (Comelec) Commissioner Resurreccion Borra made this observation in the light of the recent political exercise in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) whereby the proclamation of winners was completed four days after the balloting was held.

On Aug. 10, two days after the casting of ballots, the winners for regional assembly seats were declared in most provinces, and by Thursday afternoon, the new governor and vice governor of the autonomous region were proclaimed.

This is a record time in the history of elections in the ARMM and even in the country, according to election officials.

"The faster the process is, the more credible the results are," Borra said.

The speed is principally attributed to the small number of positions at stake and voter turnover in precincts and the canvassing of the votes cast was fast.

Last week's election was held to choose the ARMM's governor, vice governor and 24 representatives to the regional legislative assembly which are elected from every district in five provinces. A total of 124 individuals vied for the various seats up for grabs.

In each ballot, a voter is asked to fill only five slates: The governor, vice governor and three regional assembly representatives.

But this is not the case during the synchronized election for national and local leaders where the sheer number of positions that are being contested makes voting and canvassing a very time-consuming activity. The monstrous job of vote counting will be compounded when a large number of individuals vie for the positions contested.

Borra said that if the national and local elections were held in separate dates, the situation in such electoral exercises can approximate that of the ARMM elections in terms of manageability.

A synchronized election is decreed by the Constitution.

If held separately, Borra calculates that generating results would still be faster even with manual counting.

He also pointed out that even if counting is done electronically, it will still take time to generate results if elections are synchronized.

"It will still be time-consuming to read the names of a string of candidates, recite the votes they respectively got in order for a computer encoder to tabulate these electronically," he explained.

At this point when the Supreme Court has already ruled on the nullity of the contract on the automated counting machines and decreed its return to its supplier, Borra said the Comelec will be scouting for counting equipment designed "to suit the political culture of the country."

The new counting machines must be "fast, accurate and with less human intervention." *Ryan Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DILG says 'forgotten' town to remain forgotten

BAGUIO CITY—A "forgotten" town not found in any Philippine map may no longer have the legal standing to be reconstituted by Malacañang, the Department of the Interior and Local Governments here said on Monday.

Lino Taway, an 86-year-old Kalinga old timer, has asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to reestablish the "phantom" town of Elpidio Quirino, which, he said, existed when the late President Diosdado Macapagal broke up the Mt. Province into Mt. Province, Kalinga-Apayao, Benguet and Ifugao in 1966.

Elpidio Quirino is composed of the villages of Mabaca, Tawang, and Buaya of Balbalan town; the barangays of Aciga, Ammacian, Wagud, Ballayangon and Katabbogan of Pinukpuk town; and Barangay Sacpil of Conner town in Apayao.

Nullified

The Supreme Court nullified the late Macapagal's executive order that would have guided the town's operations, and nothing has been heard of it again, according to Taway, Elpidio Quirino's first appointed mayor in 1965.

But Taway's petition may be moot. Elpidio Quirino town is no longer recognized by the country's laws, which created the Cordillera Administrative Region, and by the law that bisected Kalinga-Apayao into two separate provinces in 1988, said Everdina Doctor, DILG Cordillera director.

"This means that its reconstitution has been overtaken by events. And there are indications its creation has never been backed by the political leaders of that province," Doctor said, after conducting a week-long investigation of Taway's petition.

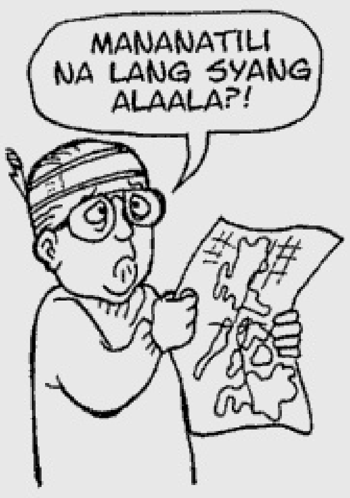
Interest revived

The INQUIRER learned of Taway's May 3 petition to Ms Arroyo last week, after the Philippine Information Agency revived interest in the phantom town.

No Cordillera records gave any references to Elpidio Quirino, but researches made by Peter Balocnit, PIA Kalinga information center manager, indicate that Taway had already written three presidents to revive the town. Taway had petitioned former President Corazon Aquino in 1990 and 1992 and President Fidel Ramos in 1994.

Balocnit, in a paper, wrote that "the Elpidio Quirino municipal district was among the 25 towns re-created by [the late strongman Ferdinand] Marcos under Omnibus Bill No. 76 filed by Rep. Rashid Lucman of Lanao del Sur."

Balocnit said the community pursed its separation bid after World War II "on the belief that the district could [survive on] its vast mineral resources [that may be] found from Ammacian upstream to old Mabaca, the fertile valley of Umnay in Sacpil."


MANANATILI NA LANG SYANG ALAALA?!

No conflict

But the most significant reason, which Elpidio Quirino residents use to justify a separation, is the fact that town's inhabitants have not engaged their neighbors in tribal conflicts "unlike other districts where tribal quarrels occurred often," he said.

Violent tribal feuds occur frequently in Kalinga.

Balocnit said "Taway continued to communicate to Malacanang, Congress and other agencies" because he was certain Republic Act 4695, which separated Mt. Province into four provinces in 1966, acknowledged Elpidio Quirino's existence.

Section 5 of RA 4695 states that "the province of Kalinga-Apayao shall comprise the sub-provinces of Kalinga and Apayao... [and the] municipalities of Balbalan, Lubuagan, Pinukpuk, Tabuk, Tanudan, Tinglayan, Quirino and Liwan in the subprovince of Kalinga shall retain its status as the sub-province of Kalinga."

But RA 7878, which separated Kalinga and Apayao in 1995, no longer includes Elpidio Quirino in its territory, Doctor said.

She said the government deficit may also discourage government from pursuing a division of the Kalinga towns of Balbalan and Pinukpok. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Sayyaf men killed in Maguindanao clash, says Army

AWANG, Maguindanao—Suspected members of the terror group Abu Sayyaf were killed in a clash with government soldiers in Guindulungan town on Sunday afternoon, the military yesterday reported.

Lt. Col. Franklin del Prado, spokesperson of the Army's Sixth Infantry Division, said two soldiers, Cpl. Rommel Herrera and Pfc. Haron Bendeya, both of the 64th Infantry Battalion, were also wounded in the 20-minute gunfight in the outskirts of Barangay Hahan in Guindulungan town.

He said Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani's group, with at least 15 men, was sighted by their civilian spies in Hahan.

"Government spies provided us the information. After the fighting, our soldiers reported that there were fatalities in the exchange of gunfire because it's a close encounter," Del Prado said.

But Del Prado could not say how many Abu Sayyaf members were killed.

Since last month, at least six Abu Sayyaf members were killed in clashes with government troops in Maguindanao.

The Abu Sayyaf, which has been blamed for bombings and kidnappings, has been linked to the al-Qaida terrorist network and is on the United States' list of terrorist organizations. *Jeoffrey Maitem, Mindanao Bureau*

French firm denies it got bulk of ₱1B for rehab of highway

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BUGUIAS, Benguet—The French consultant supervising the rehabilitation of Halsema Highway here denied charges that his firm had taken much of the P1.038 billion loan granted by the World Bank for the project's completion.

Claude Allouche said the consultancy services of his company, the BCEOM Societe Francaise d'Ingenierie based in France, was obtained through a bidding in May 2000, and the fees paid for his services did not go to his pocket but to the firm.

He said the WB pays his fees through a separate account and not from the fund allotted for Halsema's repair.

Allouche, 62, was reacting to reports that he continues to draw his consultancy fees yet Halsema's rehabilitation cannot be completed by September this year.

Mt. Province Rep. Victor Dominguez and Benguet Rep. Samuel Dangwa earlier said Allouche, as a consultant, had not been up to task in ensuring that the project would be completed according to its original schedule.

Dominguez also questioned Allouche's decision to endorse the request of Daewoo, the project's Korean contractor, to extend construction work until March next year and realign the remaining P186 million of the project cost to repair five critical areas along the highway.

The project started in July 2001 and was supposed to be completed next month.

Dominguez fumed upon learning that P29.5 million had already been awarded as consultancy fees for the project's extension without the request for realignment of the remaining loan having been officially approved by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Mario Bandelaria, WB project director officer-in-charge, told Dominguez in a letter last month that the total payment made to BCEOM for the project package from La Trinidad, Benguet, to Banaue, Ifugao (200 km) was P129.95 million.

But Dominguez said the project had already spent P670 million that represented almost 50 percent of the rehabilitation cost from La Trinidad to Mt. Data in Mt. Province alone.

"The present project has already eaten up P350 million in consultancy fees plus P320 million in variation orders," Dominguez wrote the DPWH. "Let us stop the requested project extension. Help Juan de la Cruz stamp [out] corruption."

Dominguez said "there must be a limit to the amount of consultancy fees."

He said for local consultants, the fee would only be 16 percent of the project cost.

But Allouche said the entire WB loan actually consisted of three parts—construction expenses, right of way compensations and consultancy fees. He said foreign-funded loans require the hiring of foreign consultants.

He said the project's delay is not his or Daewoo's fault.

"There are still unresolved right of way disputes and the onset of the rainy season had [disrupted] the project's swift completion," Allouche said.

Being PMA classmates means easy teamwork

By Luige A. del Puerto

IT HELPS when the heads of the Armed Forces and the national police were classmates at the Philippine Military Academy. It makes for easier communication, especially in times of crisis, a senior police official said yesterday.

"Early on, the coordination and closeness are there," said Deputy Director General Avelino Razon Jr., referring to his upperclassmen at the PMA, Director General Arturo Lomibao of the Philippine National Police and Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga, the newly designated chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Senga, Lomibao and former AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu are members of PMA Class of 1972.

These top officials do not have to go far to feel each other out, according to Razon. "They understand each other just through body language," he said.

Graduates of the PMA usually lord it over the AFP and the PNP, forming an elite group whose loyalty is often to each other rather than to a specific ideology or politics.

With ties going back to their younger days, AFP and PNP officials often move as one when faced with drastic choices, such as quelling a coup or mounting one.

Strong spine

When Ms Arroyo's Cabinet secretaries resigned last month and called on her to step down, the AFP under Senga and the PNP under Lomibao stood firm and provided a strong spine to her beleaguered administration.

Echoing each other in many instances, both officials warned their men against joining a particular camp. Both men ordered their troops to remain neutral and apolitical amid the escalating political crisis.

So far, no one has publicly disobeyed the order, although a shadowy group claiming to be junior officers of the police and the military has vowed to bring down Ms Arroyo's administration.

Senga was Razon's squad leader in the PMA. Razon said Senga took care of his underclassmen "like a brother and a father."

Yesterday, the PNP official also defended his classmate, Maj. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., the incoming Army chief and one of several military generals mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tape.

"[Esperon] asserts that when he was chief of operations of the AFP, he was directly supervising the campaign of the AFP in ensuring an honest, orderly and peaceful election," Razon said.

GMA orders AFP chief of staff: Insulate military from politics

From page A1

of the special operations command, will formally take over as Army chief on Wednesday, officials said.

Abu reached the mandatory retirement age of 56 in June, but the President extended his term "to ensure the smooth transition of military leadership," her spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said.

Critics accuse Ms Arroyo of using "revolving door" appointments of military chiefs to ensure their loyalty. Ms Arroyo holds the record of having the biggest number of AFP chiefs of staff. The dictator Ferdinand Marcos had seven military chiefs during his two-decade rule.

Senga, who will serve until July 2006 when he turns 56, vowed to continue the reforms began by Abu, including streamlining the 113,000-strong military, fighting corruption and maintaining neutrality.

Insulated from politics

"Our entire organization must be insulated from politics," he said, enjoining the military to ensure that "every Filipino soldier must be a symbol of peace."

"The AFP's transformation at this point is not so much the modernization of equipment and arms to match those of more advanced countries. We cannot afford it anyway," he said.

"The transformation that we need today is in changing the way we, soldiers and leaders, think about the challenges and opportunities presented to us by the program for reform."

In her speech at the formal turnover of command ceremony, Ms Arroyo thanked the military for "successfully guarding our democracy, especially these past few months." She referred to accusations that she rigged last year's election following allegations that her family pocketed illegal gambling payoffs.

Although the President has vehemently denied the charges, they have nevertheless set off fresh coup rumors and an impeachment proceeding against her in Congress.

"General Senga, I expect you to keep the Armed Forces of the Philippines within the Constitution, and do not allow any partisan quarters to undermine the chain of command," Ms Arroyo ordered. "I expect you to finish off the terrorists while supporting the peace process."

Beyond battling Moro rebels and foreign militants from the al-Qaida-linked regional network Jemaah Islamiyah, Philippine troops are fighting communist guerrillas who are active in most parts of the country.

Peace talks

The government is in the midst of Malaysian-brokered peace talks with the largest Moro rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, to try to end a three-decade conflict that has killed 120,000 people and stunted development in the South.

A stable and neutral military is seen as crucial for Ms Arroyo to maintain her hold on power. Allegations against her, based on wiretapped phone calls, suggest generals may have helped her cheat in the polls, sparking anger among lower to middle-ranking officers.

Ms Arroyo earlier fended off two coup attempts—a bloody attempt by supporters of ousted President Joseph Estrada to storm Malacañang in May 2001, and a brief military takeover of the upscale Oakwood apartment complex in Makati City two years ago.

Abu expressed disappointment that congressional hearings have "maligned" senior military officers, some of whom were implicated in vote-rigging allegations against Ms Arroyo, and sadness that retired officers have tried to entice active members to turn against the administration.

He asked politicians and retired officers not to interfere in the military's internal affairs. "Leave us alone," he implored.

The President credited Abu with overhauling the military headquarters and abolishing the office of the AFP comptroller.

"All these resulted in a leaner organization and a most effective and transparent distribution and utilization of personnel, logistics and financial resources," she said in her speech.

Role model

Welcoming Senga to the helm of the AFP, Ms Arroyo explained why she chose him. A few years ago, she said, Senga was supposed to have headed J-2, or the intelligence unit, which she described as the "most important, most glamorous, most powerful and most sensitive position" in the Armed Forces.

But she said a senior official of the national security establishment blocked Senga's appointment. She said Senga accepted "the unusual change of instruction in midstream with the perfect discipline of an officer and a gentleman" and moved on to the job of Southern Command chief.

"General Senga may not have made it to J-2 but how he handled himself in that situation and afterwards affirmed in my mind the conviction by many that he indeed deserves to be chief of staff of the AFP," the President said.

She said she had to tell this story "because we need role models, especially for the young officers."

"Specially at a time like this, as General Abu said, when there are so many attempts to drive a wedge between the senior officers and the young officers," she said. "Idealism, self-sacrifice and courage are not the monopoly of the youth for I have seen in our senior officers like General Senga the same outstanding quality."

She added: "I instruct the new AFP leadership under General Senga to engage in renewed dialogue with the young officers to show them all officers regardless of length of service are equally committed to the values for which they have dedicated their lives." *With reports from AP, Reuters*

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

FOLLOWING are the people who had served as Armed Forces chief of staff and Philippine National Police chief in the Arroyo administration:

AFP	Term	Appointed as
Angelo Reyes	July 1999-Mar 2001	Secretary, Department of National Defense (March 2001-August 2003) Ambassador-at-large for counterterrorism (October 2003-July 2004) Head, National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (October 2003-July 2004) Secretary, Department of the Interior and Local Government (July 2004 - present)
Diomedio Villanueva	March 2001 - May 2002	Director and general manager, Public Estates Authority (October 2002-December 2003) Postmaster general and CEO, Philippine Postal Corp. (January 2003 - present)
Roy Cimatu	May 2002-September 2002	Special envoy to the Middle East (September 2002 - present)
Benjamin Defensor	September-November 2002	Chair, Counter Terrorism Task Force of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation/ ambassador-at-large for counterterrorism (November 2004 - present)
Dionisio Santiago	November 2002-April 2003	Director, Bureau of Corrections (May 2003-November 2004) Executive Director, Dangerous Drugs Board (November 2004 - present)
Narciso Abaya	April 2003-October 2004	President & CEO, Bases Conversion Development Authority (October 2004 - present)
Efren Abu	October 2004-August 2005	
PNP		
Leandro Mendoza	January 2001-June 2002	Secretary, Department of Transportation and Communications (June 2002 - present)
Hermogenes Ebdane	June 2002-August 2004	National Security Adviser (August 2004-February 2005 Secretary, Department of Public Works and Highways (February 2005 - present)
Edgardo Aglipay	August 2004-March 2005	

PDI RESEARCH. MARICAR TOLOSA/ INQGRAPHIC: E SAMBO

Senga also subject of complaint

From page A1

cording to a well-placed lawyer at the Ombudsman, but something about a "bagman who was linked to Senga."

According to the source, a team has been assigned to look into the complaint, which has placed Senga on the growing list of generals and colonels who have been under the scrutiny of the Ombudsman for complaints ranging from massive graft to falsification of birth dates.

Yesterday, Senga, who is reputed to be one of the most good-looking officers in the Armed Forces, took his oath as the eighth AFP chief of staff since January 2001, when Ms Arroyo became President and commander in chief following the ouster of President Joseph Estrada.

Senga, 55, takes over the 113,000-strong military amid allegations that some of its ranking members may have been involved in Ms Arroyo's plans to cheat in last year's elections.

Lifestyle check

He also assumes the post amid restiveness among junior and middle-level officers, who want a full investigation of the officers involved in the alleged cheating.

Senga himself has not been spared from such allegations.

In October last year, a group which claimed to consist of concerned officers and enlisted personnel from the 6th Infantry Division that Senga headed in May 2004, urged Ms Arroyo, Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, several senators and the media to conduct a "lifestyle check" on Senga and two other officers close to him.

In its letter of complaint, the group alleged that Senga and the two officers "sold" the "entire 6th Infantry Division to serve as a private army to a candidate in exchange for money.

An INQUIRER source at the Ombudsman, however, said the office was not "aware" of an election-related complaint against Senga.

US training

Born in Calumpang, Marikina, on July 21, 1950, Senga is a product of the public school system, starting at the Marikina Elementary School then the University of the Philippines High School and, finally, the Philippine Military Academy.

Senga underwent training at the US Army Infantry School at Fort Bragg, the US Defense Intelligence College and the US Pacific Command, as well as in the United Kingdom and Israel.

In 1979, Senga obtained his MBA from the Ateneo de Manila, and proceeded to law proper. He quit the Ateneo law school in 1984, after completing two years.

First assignment

Senga's PMA Class of 1972 was among the first to face the unrelenting don't-take-prisoners war waged by the secessionist Moro National Liberation Front in the early '70s.

His first assignment was as platoon leader, Bravo Company, 27th Infantry Battalion of the 4th ID based in Cagayan de Oro City. He was wounded in Mindanao.

Senga carved a career as a commander while assigned as head of the 59th IB based in Laguna, chief of the 701st Infantry Brigade based in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, and eventually the 6th Infantry Division in Central Mindanao.

In between these key commands, Senga was assigned to intelligence and civil relations. He was also the AFP spokesperson during the term of Gen. Angelo Reyes as AFP chief of staff from 1999 to 2001.

Senga is married to Pilar Pigason and they have three children.

Asia marks end of war, but little fanfare in RP

From page A1

ed on its neighbors.

But even as the region memorialized the end of the conflict that killed millions of soldiers and civilians from the jungles of Burma to the glistening beaches of the Pacific and the sprawling cities of Japan and Korea, there was little fanfare in the Philippines which suffered more than any other Southeast Asian country.

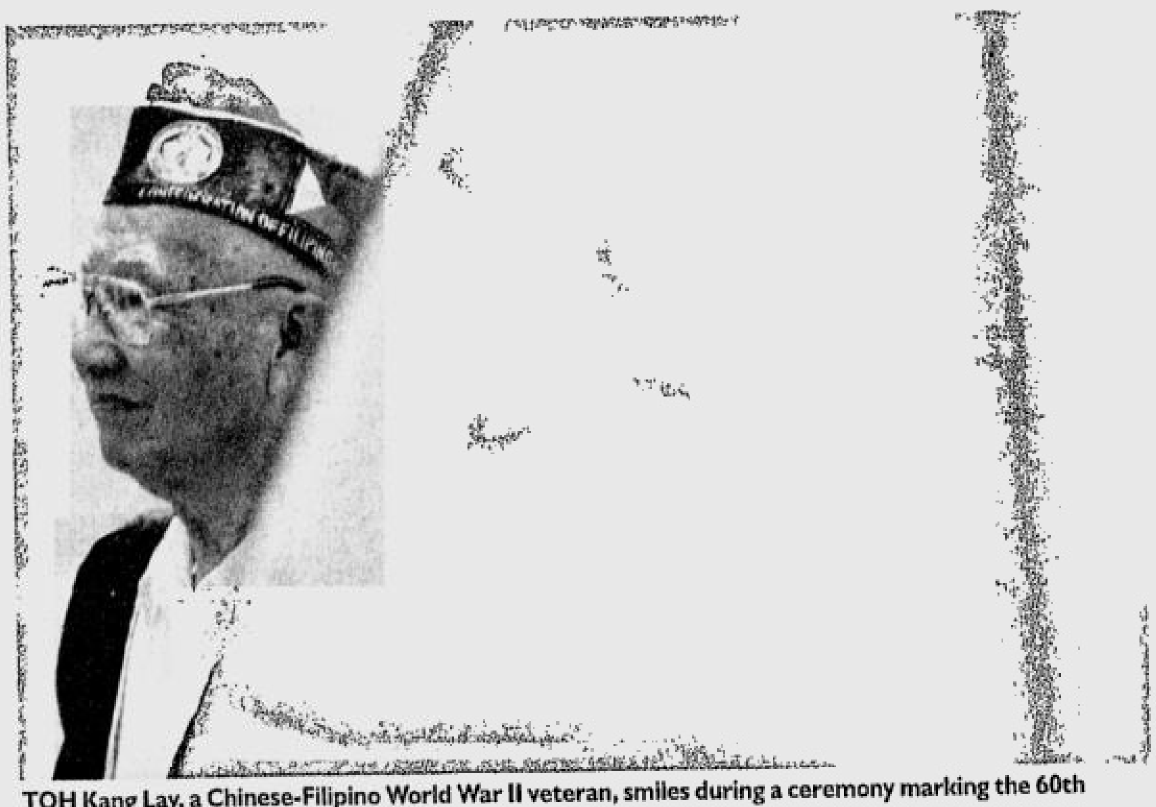
In Manila, where 100,000 Filipinos died just in the month-long battle between Japanese forces and American troops that turned the former "Pearl of the Orient" into a wasteland in 1945, the only commemoration was a small ceremony by Chinese-Filipinos who laid wreaths at a memorial.

President Macapagal-Arroyo did not mention the war in her speech during the swearing in of Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga as the new chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Still, a dozen members of the Descendants of Filipino-Chinese World War II Heroes remembered the heroism their forebears had played in the war with special rites at the Riverpark in Escolta, Manila.

"It is a little known fact that there were thousands of Filipino-Chinese men and women who joined the resistance to repel the Japanese troops," Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, the guest of honor at the ceremony, told the INQUIRER.

Atienza was awarded a certificate and medal of appreciation for Manila's decision to move a 12 ft tall obelisk from the squalid Plaza Binondo to the Riverpark in Escolta earlier this year. The obelisk serves as a memorial to the contribution of Chinese-Filipinos guerrillas to the anti-Japanese effort.



TOH Kang Lay, a Chinese-Filipino World War II veteran, smiles during a ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of Japan's surrender at a war marker in Binondo, Manila. REM ZAMORA

"We want other people to know that our fathers and grandfathers valiantly fought side by side with the Americans and fellow Filipinos to ward off the Japanese soldiers," said Thomas Sy, an official of the group.

According to Sy, about 10,000 members of the Chinese-Filipino community were executed during the war.

Some Filipinos put the lack of national outrage at Japan's actions down to national amnesia or the fact that Japan was only the latest in a series of brutal colonizers after Spain and the United States.

Short memories

"Filipinos have very short memories," said writer Francisco Sionil Jose, who lived through the Japanese occupation and who approves of the US decision to drop atomic bombs on Japanese cities in 1945.

"My ambition was to run amok in Japan and kill as many Japanese as possible," Sionil Jose added.

Some of those who experienced the 1942-1945 Japanese occupation first hand likewise found it hard to forgive and impossible to forget.

Retired Col. Rafael Estrada, who fought in the defense of the Bataan peninsula from 1941, said he did not feel hatred for the Japanese when they first invaded the Philippines.

"But when the war started, of course, you can see your companions being killed, being shot at, being bombarded, then anger comes into play."

But Estrada reserves most of his anger for the Filipino politicians whose corrupt ways he says have dishonored those who defended the country.

"What it is today after 60 years, we are very disappointed," he said. "This is the reward given us which we do not appreciate very much. We are very sad."

Thousands of men, women and children were shot or bayoneted by Japanese soldiers in the battle of Manila. Historians estimate that for every six Filipinos killed by Japanese forces, four were killed by American forces trying to liberate the city, whose modern-day ugliness still bears testament to the destruction.

In one atrocity recounted in the 1995 book "The Battle for Manila," Japanese troops massacred about 60 people, including children and Catholic priests, who had taken refuge in a chapel at La Salle college.

Fernando Vasquez-Prada, who was 5 at the time, was quoted as saying he had forgiven the Japanese but could never forget how they bayoneted his mother to death at the college after she tried to protect him and also killed his father and three brothers.

"To forget is not required of a Christian. I cannot and will not forget the atrocities committed to my family during the Japanese occupation," he said.

Anger and sorrow

Anger mixed with sorrow amid rekindled tension between Tokyo and the countries its Imperial Army invaded decades ago.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi expressed "deep reflections and heartfelt apology" for the Tokyo's wartime colonization and pledged that his country would never forget the "terrible lessons" of the war, which ended Aug. 15, 1945.

"Our country has caused great damage and pain to people in many countries, especially our Asian neighbors, through colonization and invasion," Koizumi said in a statement. At a ceremony shortly thereafter, Koizumi and Emperor Akihito—son of wartime Emperor Hirohito—bowed before an altar of chrysanthemums at a nationally televised service for the nation's estimated 3 million war dead.

In Australia, thousands gathered at ceremonies around the country to mark the end of the war, with Prime Minister John Howard joined by Japan's Ambassador to Australia Hideaki Ueda in laying a wreath at the national war memorial.

But that didn't mean the ghosts of the past had been laid to rest Down Under.

Max Williams, who fought in the jungles of Papua New Guinea, speculated that it would be easier for future generations to accept a Japanese presence at commemoration services. *With reports from AP and Reuters*

METRO

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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inquirer met name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

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2 die as robbers strike

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TWO ROBBERIES left two persons dead in the cities of Marikina and Pasig yesterday.

Robbers failed to take any loot in Marikina but shot dead a pharmacist and his driver at 2:45 p.m. along E. Santos Street, Barangay Concepcion Uno.

Edward Young, 24, and his wife Sarah, 31, had just withdrawn P250,000 from the China Bank Branch in Barangay Sta. Elena, Marikina, and were on their way to Barangay Bayan-Bayanan when two gunmen on a motorcycle tried to intercept them.

The gunmen blocked the path of the Youngs' white Mitsubishi L-300 van but their driver, Glenn Magbanua, 47, stepped on the gas.

City police chief Manuel Gaerlan said one of the men, who was armed with a .45 caliber pistol, apparently panicked and opened fire, hitting Magbanua.

A bullet hit the driver in the head and killed him instantly.

When the van stopped, the robbers drove up to the vehicle and again opened fire, hitting Young and Sarah.

Young, who suffered several gunshot wounds, was already dead when he reached the hospital, Gaerlan said. Sarah was hit in the left arm.

Hours earlier, at the Ortigas Business District in Pasig City, another group of armed men robbed an armored van that was delivering money to a remittance company at the Discovery Suites building on ADB Avenue.

The incident left four people wounded and a still undetermined amount of money in the hands of robbers.

The armored van of the ATP Inc. with body number 3246 arrived in front of the building at about 9:30 a.m., Pasig City police chief Raul Medina said.

The driver parked the van near the back entrance of the building, near HSBC Bank.

Police said the van came from an I-Bank Branch in Makati City and was to deliver bags of cash to I-Remit Company at the 20th Floor of the building.

But just as bank teller Anthony Lansang and two van security escorts unloaded the first bag of cash, a blue Mitsubishi Adventure sped near the van.

Three men, one of whom was wearing a polo barong according to witnesses, got off and started to pepper the building with bullets from M-16 assault rifles and .45-caliber pistols.

Some of the robbers turned to the Lansang and the guards, who were already carrying the bag near the entrance door.

The security guards carrying the money into the building were not able to fire back because they had left their guns inside the armored van.

Investigator PO3 Sandy Baybayon said it was a policy of the building not to allow guns inside the building.

The robbers shot security guard Rommel Villanoa, 37, hitting him in the right leg. Lansang sought cover inside the building, leaving a bag at the stairs.

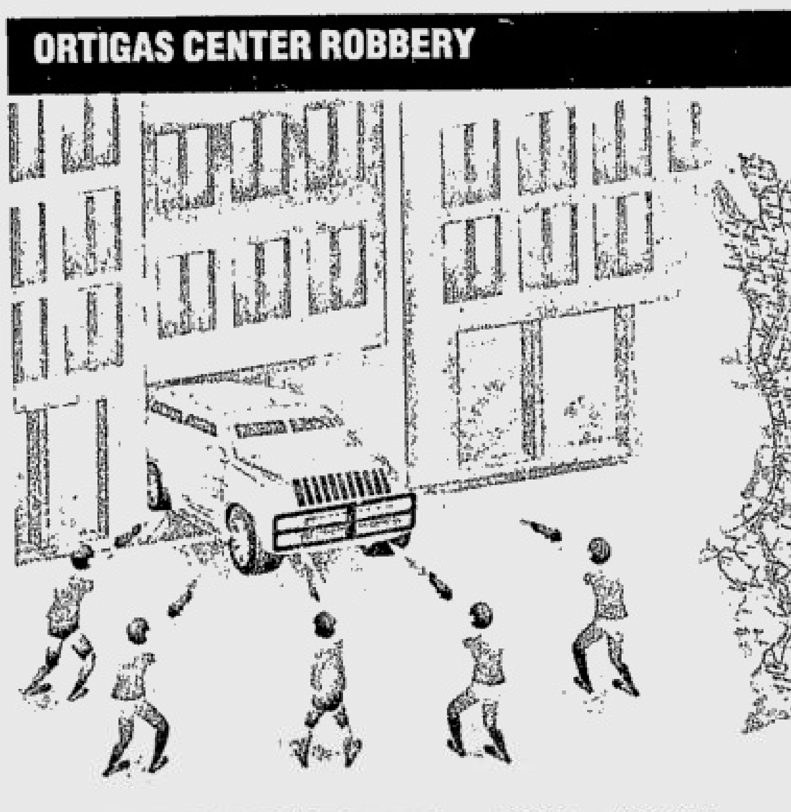
The robbers grabbed the bag while some of them turned to the armored van, still loaded with several bags of cash.

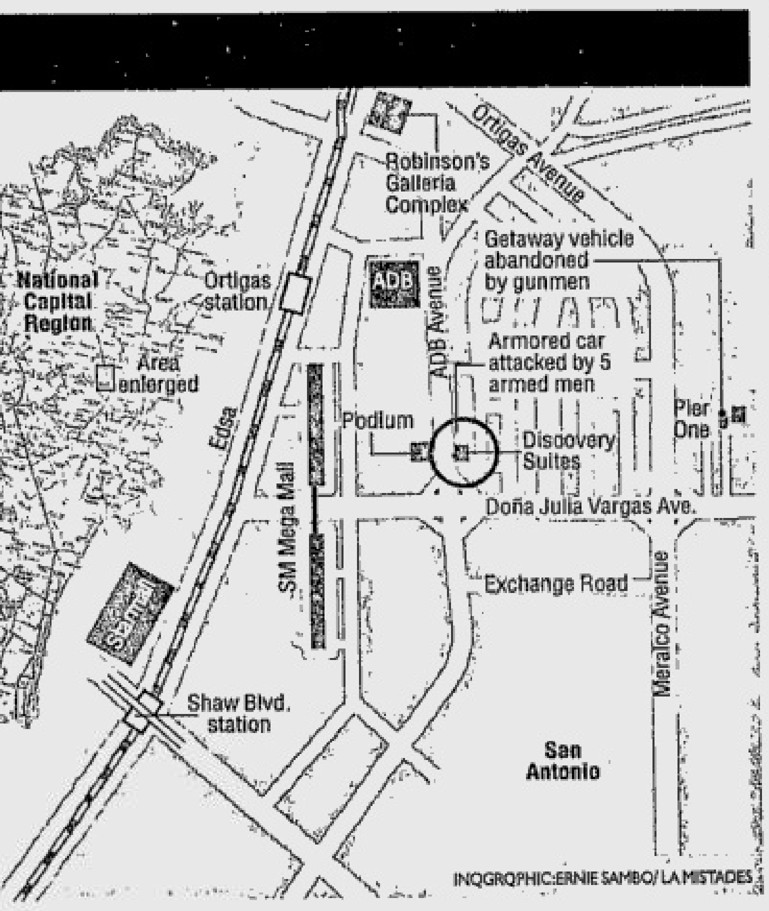
But armored van driver Jose Mallari Jr. was quick to close the door forcing the robbers to leave without taking money from the van.

Police later found the abandoned getaway vehicle parked in front of the Pier One Bar and Grill Restaurant at the Ortigas Auto Depot Compound in Barangay Ugong, less than half a kilometer from the crime scene.

A waiter told the INQUIRER he saw the occupants of the blue Mitsubishi Adventure transfer to a white Toyota Revo.

ORTIGAS CENTER ROBBERY





INQGRQPHIC:ERNIE SAMBO/ LA MISTADES

ROBBERS failed to take money from the van at right. LYNNRILLON

FAST FACTS

- Armored van of ATP Inc. arrives at Discovery Suites at about 9:30 a.m.
- Three to five men arrive on board a blue Mitsubishi Adventure and start opening fire at the building with M-16 rifles and .45-caliber pistols.
- The gunmen take a duffle bag containing an undetermined number of cash.
- Robbers fled after about three minutes. Their etaway vehicle found in front of a nearby restaurant.

Groups plan new fare hikes

By Clarissa S. Batino

SURGING fuel prices may force public transport groups to press for another P2-increase that would raise minimum fares to P9.50 while taxis are planning to ask for a P20-hike in the current P30 flag down rate, representatives of jeepney and taxi groups said.

According to transport groups, they would seek a new round of fare hikes should the prices of gasoline or diesel hit P34 to P35 per liter. Diesel already costs more than P30 a liter in most stations while gasoline fetches more than P32 a liter.

Vigor Mendoza, lawyer for the groups, said they were already looking at a possible fare hike petition of P2 for the first 4 kilometers plus 25 centavos on each additional kilometer.

But Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board chair Maria Elena Bautista said the P2-increase approved by the board recently for jeeps and buses was sufficient up to P35 a liter.

She said the board would wait for the petition of taxi groups, which last saw an increase last year.

However, Mendoza added, "We assure the public that for as long as the transport groups can hold off any increase, we will try."

But transport groups in Regions 6 (Visayas), 10 (Northern Mindanao), 11 (Davao) and 12 (Socsargen and Caraga) will press the LTFRB to act on their appeal as soon as possible.

The LTFRB suspended the implementation of a P1-hike in the four regions due as transport groups sought a P2-increase as well.

Jeeps and non-aircon buses had just increased their minimum fares by P2 last June 21.

Makati pilot testing coco fuel

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE COUNTRY'S financial center, Makati City, is introducing the use of alternative fuel in both private and public vehicles in the city to cope with the rising cost of oil.

In partnership with the Department of Energy (DOE), the United States Department of Energy (US-DOE), and the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Makati will become a pilot-testing center for coco methyl ester (CME), a variant of diesel blended with coconut-derived oil.

CME, a bio-diesel introduced commercially recently, reportedly has less harmful emissions. It may also boost incomes of coconut farmers, the city government said.

"Clean air is a major concern for us in Makati. As the financial capital, Makati has the greatest concentration of vehicles in Metro Manila, and we are definitely concerned about their effects on air quality," said Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay in a statement.

The city has several commercial establishments, multinational and local companies. Some 770,000 vehicles pass through Makati everyday, about 40 percent of the total number of vehicles on Metro Manila roads.

Bio-diesel is more expensive at P65 per liter, but it may prove cheaper overall by increasing mileage.

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said yesterday bus companies might save on fuel costs with its Organized Bus Route (OBR) scheme.

The bus dispatch system, announced by Malacañang recently as an energy saving measure, would limit the number of trips buses could make each day based on the volume of commuters on Edsa.

MMDA computations suggest the OBR can save as much as P1.2 billion in fuel expenses if buses will ply their routes only twice a day, six days a week. Each bus now spends about P3,240 a day on fuel for four round-trips. The new scheme would cut a bus' expenses by P1,393 a day.

The MMDA said two round-trips for each bus would maximize passenger loading. It noted that buses now usually ran only half full.

Shampoo used in escape

By DJ Yap

SHAMPOO has recently been found useful not only in cleaning hair but also giving a crime offender a clean getaway.

Jamael Abang, 25, who was arrested on July 26 in Barangay Commonwealth in Quezon City for selling shabu, managed to escape after he used shampoo in faking a suicide.

On July 30, members of the Quezon City Police District Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Group found Abang "frothing" in the mouth at about 4 p.m.

Police believed that he was trying to poison himself by drinking shampoo. They then rushed him to the East Avenue Medical Center for treatment.

He was escorted by PO3 Reynaldo Bayogo and another policeman, investigators said.

Bayogo and his companion waited as doctors treated Abang.

However, sensing that his escorts were not around, the detainee walked out of the Emergency Room and escaped.

Police have launched a manhunt against Abang, who is believed to have escaped to his hometown in Mindanao.

DI LANG PAMPALIGO, PANTAKAS PA!

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

Report shows Binay et al. cheated gov't

THE COMMISSION on Audit (COA) has found overpricing in the purchase of medical and office supplies and "ghost" delivery of some items by the Makati City government led by Mayor Jejomar Binay and his vice mayor, Ernesto Mercado.

The COA reports were the bases for the filing of P662-million plunder case against Binay et al.

The minutes of an exit conference on Feb. 27, 2002 at the COA Building in Quezon City was held thresh out a COA audit report. The meeting was attended by members of a COA special task force, Makati City officials led by Vice Mayor Mercado, and COA auditors assigned at the Makati City Hall.

When Mercado was told at the conference that there was falsification of documents in the purchase of medical supplies for the Ospital ng Makati amounting to P58 million, Mercado blamed the supplier.

An excerpt from the COA report:

Vice Mayor Mercado: *Alam n'yo,* right after reading the advance copy of the Audit Highlights, *pinatawag ko ang* Director ng Ospital ng Makati *para tawagan at hanapin si* Mr. Apollo Carreon (proprietor of Apollo Medical Equipment and Supplies). I told and warned Mr. Apollo Carreon that if he will not be able to explain the circumstance we will sue him.

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

***Katangahan namin, hindi namin kasalanan dahil nabiktima kami ni* Apollo (Our stupidity, not our fault, because we ourselves were victims of Apollo). We've been honest, verification of documents submitted by Apollo were based on information given by Apollo. *Dinaya ni* Apollo. *Tama ang* findings *ng* Team (special COA team), we will just ask consideration from the Team because we have no technical expertise in the determination of the specifications of medical equipment. *Magpa*-file *kami ng demanda kay* Apollo.**

What Mercado was saying was tantamount to an admission of irregularity, although he blamed the supplier.

C'mon, how could the supplier put one over bright guys like Binay and Mercado!

* * *

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu turned over yesterday to his successor, Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga, command of the 120,000-strong officers and rank and file.

Abu's departure was welcomed, albeit secretly, by most of his subordinates who considered him anything but a leader that looked after the welfare of his men.

Instead of buying medicines and necessary things for the fighting men in the field, Abu focused on non-essential and low-priority projects: the overpriced renovation of the sidewalk in Camp Aguinaldo, AFP's general headquarters; and the scandalous construction of a resort for officers in Boracay.

An officer with a "star" rank described the sidewalk renovation and construction of the Boracay resort as "atrocious projects that could not be thought of by any leader except Abu."

Abu also quarreled with his subordinates, the first AFP chief to have done so. He withheld operational funds for the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces (ISAFP) because, according to sources, he was at loggerheads with its chief.

If Efren Abu thought the soldiers who paraded before him at Camp Aguinaldo grandstand yesterday were sincere, he was doubly mistaken.

Those soldiers were not sending him off, they were saying to themselves, "Good riddance, Sir."

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See print ads and flyers for complete details.

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METBRIEFS

GRO sparks brawl

A TABLE-HOPPING Guest Relations Officer (GRO) sparked a brawl inside the Kainan sa Baesa Restaurant in Quezon City Sunday night that led to the killing of Fermin Birguro, 46, of Bagong Silang, Caloocan City. He was reportedly hit in the head by fellow customer Gary Villanueva who got jealous when an unidentified GRO moved from Villanueva's table to that of Birguro. *DJ Yap*

MAY-I-SHARE KO LANG NAMAN ANG BEAUTY KO A! AKO PA ANG MASAMA!

Makati 'terror' treats

TWO BAGS that caused a stir on a sidewalk of Edsa near the MRT Guadalupe Station turned out to contain boxes of *pastillas* or native sweets. The Makati Police Tactical Operations Center sent a bomb disposal unit at 2:55 p.m. to check out the package. MPD chief for operations Supt. Felipe Napoles Jr. said reports of suspicious packages were taken seriously. *Tarra V. Quismundo*

FALSE ALARM NA. MERON PA AKONG LIBRENG PASTILLAS !

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

Man in barrel a DVD vendor

AUTHORITIES identified yesterday the man cemented inside a steel barrel as Alexander Maaamos, 27, of 19 Islamic Center, Quiapo, Manila. His wife, Ala, told police that Maaamos was a vendor of compact and digital video discs. The victim was also a Maranao from Dimansangap Village, Marawi City. Maaamos was last seen by his wife on Aug. 9 at about 3:30 p.m. Three days later, his body was found in a fishpond in Malabon. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

PNP officer puts life on the line

SENIOR Insp. Eleuterio Tersona did his bit in the war on illegal gambling and ended giving up everything—including his life—for it.

Tersona, commander of the Taguig City Police Community Precinct 5, was stabbed dead when he and two of his men raided an illegal cockfight or "*tupada*" inside Marcelino Compound, Barangay Calzada-Tipas, Sunday .

When the three lawmen arrived at the *tupada* at 10:15 a.m., the more than 20 men engaged in the illegal cockfight scrambled to elude arrest, said Taguig police chief Supt. Ramon Reyes.

During the commotion, someone stabbed Tersona in the abdomen, Reyes said.

The officer, who hailed from the Mountain Province and who had received two police achievement medals, died while undergoing treatment at the Makati Medical Center.

Mayor Freddie Tinga condemned the killing. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

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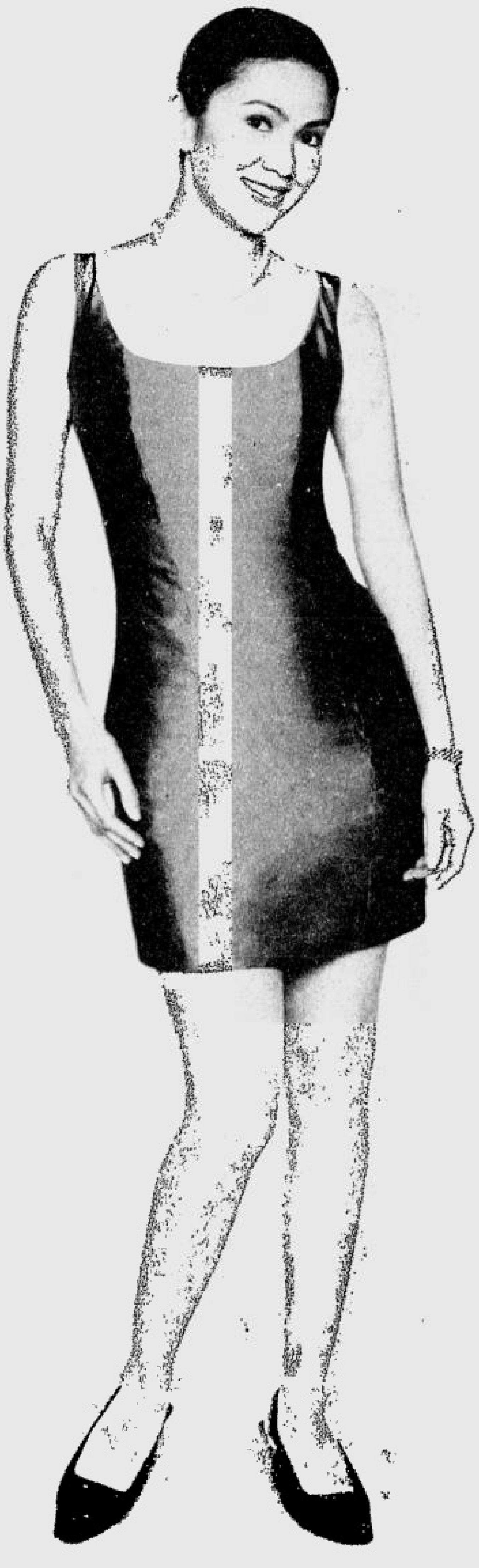

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* Source: IMS (PADDS), Dec. 2004

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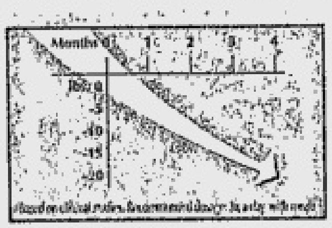

It's time to take matters into your own hands. Get ready to look great and feel better with Xenical, the world's leading weight loss treatment. Lose 10 to 20 pounds. Be a new you in 2 months.

What is Xenical?
Xenical is the world's no. 1 weight loss pill[1]. Now available without a prescription at any reputable drug store. It is safe and clinically proven[2] to help you eliminate fat.

How does Xenical work?
Xenical is a fat eliminator. It prevents some of the fat that is in your food from being digested and absorbed by your body. This is the "Xenical Action". The undigested fat is eliminated naturally through your bowel, thus preventing it from forming fatty deposits around your waist, hips and thighs.

What should I do to start?
First, you must have the right attitude. Improve your eating habits. Avoid fatty food or else you will undo the Xenical weight loss effect. Second, take your vital measurements (waistline and weight in pounds). Record them in your diary. This will give you a benchmark to track your weight loss progress over the next few months while taking Xenical.

How safe is Xenical?
Xenical is safe for individuals aged 12 years and above. Xenical is non-systemic -- meaning Xenical does not act by entering the bloodstream but only acts in the stomach to stop the absorption of fat, and then it is flushed out of your system.

How do I take Xenical?
- Take one capsule of Xenical with each of the 3 main meals per day.
- Don't waste the opportunity to lose weight with Xenical by continuing to eat badly! Eating too much causes excess weight. Now is the time to stop consuming high calorie fatty foods to allow the Xenical action to completely work.
- This is Xenical's added benefit: it teaches you how to discipline yourself to avoid foods that are not good for your health.

Should I take Xenical if I am on a diet?
Yes. Clinical studies have shown that when taken with a calorie reduced diet, Xenical will increase the amount of weight loss by 51%[3].

1 - IMS (PADDS), Dec. 2004
2 - Medical Journal of Diabetes Care ,Vol. 27, No.1, Jan 2004 issue by Jarl S. Torgerson MD, PHD, et al
3 - John Foreyt, Ph.D, Kristine Napier M.P.H., RD and Louise Aronne, M.D., F.A.C.P., The Xenical Advantage: How to use the remarkable new FDA-approved drug to lose weight faster and keep it off Safely and Effectively (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1999), 22-23.

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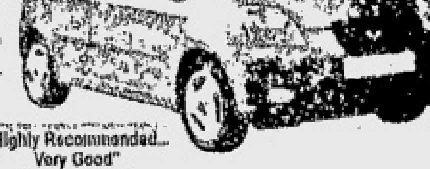

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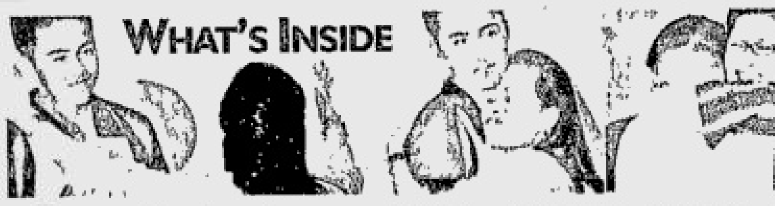
Compiled by L. Manguiat

TENNIS: Western Financial Masters; 7:30 a.m. (r-1 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.) and 11 p.m.; STAR Sports—The first round continues from Cincinnati.

BILLIARDS: Rack 'Em Up; 6 p.m. and midnight; ESPN—Django Bustamante takes on Ralf Souquet.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

WHAT'S INSIDE



■ Larry finds a home; SLR to sign No. 2 pick /A24

■ Phil retains lead as storm halts PGA Championship /A25

SAN Sebastian's Francis de Leon tries to put up a shot off Jose Rizal U's Armando Maniego (center) and James Ryan Sena. RYAN LIM

Cardinals doom Lions with gripping escape

By Jasmine W. Payo

WHEN their offense failed, the Mapua veterans turned to their defense in the final stretch.

Bottling up San Beda's gunners on the last play, the Cardinals narrowly edged the Lions, 60-59, yesterday in the NCAA basketball tournament at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"I give credit to the boys for making the last great defensive stop of the game," said coach Horacio Lim. "We missed our shots but the boys didn't give up and played tough defense."

Joferson Gonzales, whose split free throw gave the Cardinals a 60-57 lead with a minute and 16 seconds left, topscored with 22 points.

The Cardinals strengthened their hold of third spot at 7-4, behind early semifinalists Letran Knights and defending champion Philippine Christian U Dolphins.

GAMES TOMORROW
(*Cuneta Astrodome*)
11:30 a.m.—PCU vs Perpetual (Jrs)
2 p.m.—PCU vs Perpetual (Srs)
4 p.m.—Letran vs St. Benilde (Srs)
6 p.m.—Letran vs St. Benilde (Jrs)

The Lions, bidding to boost their Final Four hopes under new coach Koy Banal, slipped to a 3-8 record.

And their cause looked doomed as the San Sebastian Stags moved three games ahead at 6-5 after tripping the Jose Rizal U Bombers, 65-60.

The Stags had no trouble maintaining control with pro-bound Leo Najorda and Red Vicente combining for 39 points.

"Najorda wanted to show that he's worth it," said coach Turo Valenzona of the 2003 Most Valuable Player, who was picked ninth overall by Red Bull Barako in the PBA Rookie Draft last Sunday.

The Bombers bowed out of contention at 2-9.

Jerome Paterno nailed a jumper to pull the Lions within a point, 60-59, but the Cardinals forced ace rookie Ogie Menor and Marvin Baldivia to take hurried shots in the closing seconds.

The Cardinals took a 43-25 lead, before the Lions came up with 17-5 run to pull within 48-42.

In junior play, Eric Salamat shot 29 points to lead the Staglets past the Light Bombers, 80-66, for a league-best 9-1 record.

The varsity scores:

First Game

MAPUA 60—Gonzales 22, Co 15, Tiongco 13, Dela Peña 3, Del Rosario 2, Malgapo 2, Migraso 2, Veranga 1, Sumalinog 0, Pascual 0, Gorospe 0, Salud 0, Mazo 0.

SAN BEDA 59—Paterno 13, Gamalinda 8, Aljamal 8, Cruz 6, Baldivia 6, Tecson 6, Menor 5, Angeles 5, Antonio 2, Tirona 0, Taganas 0, Timonera 0, Arbole 0.

Quarters: 20-12, 41-25, 46-39, 60-59

Second Game

SSC 65—Vicente 20, Najorda 19, Ballesteros 5, Lindaya 5, Delgado 5, Aquino 4, Viray 3, Aguilar 2, De Leon 2, Tioseco 0.

JRU 60—Mañiego 21, Dedicatoria 20, Nicolas 6, Tala 5, Jorge 4, Fenequito 2, Sena 0, Magtahao 0, Japson 0.

Quarters: 15-12, 34-29, 50-38, 65-60.

PAN-PAC TILT

RP batters clinch 3rd over Aussies

TEAM Philippines outclassed Australia, 7-1, yesterday to salvage third place in the fifth Pan Pacific Junior Baseball Championship at the Sto. Niño Baseball grounds in Marikina City.

The Filipinos toyed with the same squad they also humbled in the eliminations, 5-3, and gained a berth in the South Asia Championship slated in October behind finalists Japan and Singapore.

The Japanese, featuring players from All-Japan champion Wakanayagi, capped their domination of the four-team event by blanking the Singaporeans, 10-0, in the title game.

Only the top two teams actually qualified to the South Asia tournament set in Singapore. As host, however, Singapore was an automatic qualifier, and the No. 2 slot went to the Philippines.

The Filipinos opened up with a three-run burst in the first inning and the Aussies could manage just one run in the second inning off Warren Vispo, the youngest member of the team at 12, who allowed two hits and struck out two in four innings.

Paolo Gerardo Mallari of Ateneo fanned four batters in a superb relief job in the last two innings.

Leading RP's offense was catcher Luke Bernardo, who belted two hits in three times at bat.

"Our batting and pitching worked," said coach Lito Ordonez, who also steered the RP team to a second-place finish, behind Chinese Taipei, in last month's Asia Pacific Bronco Baseball Championship.

Mayor Maria Lourdes Fernando graced the closing ceremonies along with tournament director Toshiki Tominaga, who represented the organizing World Baseball Federation president Takeshi Koba, and Philippine Tot Baseball Foundation head Rodolfo "Boy" Tingzon Jr.

The event was sponsored by the Philippine Amusements Gaming Corp., and supported by Yellow Cab Pizza, Colgate-Palmolive, Asia Brewery Absolute, Max's Restaurant, Jollibee, Golden Vine Laboratories and Tropical Hut.

The Filipinos bowed out of the finals after absorbing a 0-3 defeat to the fancied Japanese on Sunday.

THE PHILIPPINES' Gian Llaguno beats the throw to Australian third baseman Mitchell Thompson in the fourth inning. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

LSGH, Ateneo keep top spots

LA SALLE Greenhills and defending champion Ateneo crushed their respective rivals Sunday to show the way in the Passerelle competition of the Milo BEST Small Basketeers Philippines/Passerelle tournament at the Xavier gym.

LSGH took command early behind a 16-0 run and then repeatedly turned back San Beda College's rallies to win, 64-39, and remain on top of Group B at 5-0.

Ateneo overwhelmed Don Bosco Makati, 89-34, to pace Group A also at 5-0.

In other Passerelle games, University of Santo Tomas nipped San Beda-Alabang, 51-50; Marist School downed St. Anthony, 62-54, and De La Salle-Zobel routed First Asia Institute of Technology and Humanities, 71-25.

San Beda whipped FAITH, 72-17, for their sixth win in Group A of the SBP division, while the La Sallians walloped Lourdes School (QC), 46-25, also for No. 6 in Group B.

FEI-Cavite cagers overpower MLQU

FAR Eastern Insurance-Cavite routed Manuel L. Quezon University, 87-69, recently to improve its record to 3-1 in the 9th Danny Espiritu Cup basketball tournament at the Washington gym in Makati City.

Veteran Buboy Rodriguez paced the Insurers of Bacoor Vice Mayor Edwin Malvar and strong supporter Gov. Ireneo "Ayong" Maliksi with 19 points.

In the other game, Mediatrix leveled its record at 2-2 by beating Pamplona Station, 100-94.

Bosyo Diaz and Jimboy Robillos combined for half of Mediatrix's score to hold off the star-studded Pamplona squad of ex-PBA star Pido Jarencio.

'Grand re-launch' slated in all SEA Games venues

By Marc Anthony Reyes

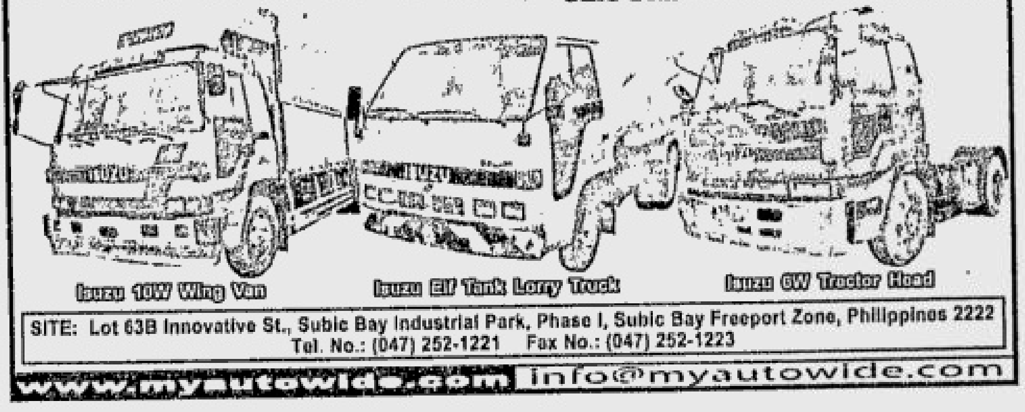
THE REVAMPED Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee will soon stage a "grand re-launching" to spark a publicity blitz in the three months left before the staging of the Nov. 27-Dec. 5 biennial event.

Sources in the Philsoc said the 2005 SEAG, which has been launched at least three times the past two years, will again be showcased to the public starting in the third week of August in Metro Manila, Bacolod City, Cebu City and Subic.

This time, a road-show presentation will be held in each of the sites to create as much public awareness as possible and to compensate for the lack of drumbeating for the event under the previous Philsoc administrative setup.

Sources said there will also be a redefinition of duties among officials after Philsoc chair Obet Pagdanganan was stripped of his key powers and was relegated to the sidelines in favor of Philip-

GRAND/ A25



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Peña, Sy looking for top finish in Indon AF3 races

DADO Peña is raring to prove his worth now that the races have shifted to his favorite track in Sentul, Indonesia, for rounds seven and eight of the Asian Formula Three Series this weekend.

Although Peña and fellow Filipino driver Tyson Sy have managed podium finishes in three of the first six rounds of the nation-hopping series, both have yet to record a win this year against world-class opposition.

They will be up against formidable opposition led by Indonesian driver Ananda Mikola, of Fastron Racing with Threebond, who is bidding to duplicate his sweep of the races last year in his home course. Mikola has so far dominated this year's series, having amassed 95 points on four first places and one runner-up finish.

However, Peña and Sy, both 18, exuded high hopes of breaking through in the 3.9-km Sentul International Circuit.

"It's nice to be back in Sentul, it's one of my favorite tracks," said Peña, lead driver of Team Goddard Minardi Team Asia, who is running sixth in the overall standings with 37 points, just a point ahead of Sy.

"I'm hoping everything falls into place," added Peña, who also carries the flag for PLDT myPad. "I've been in search of my first win and this just might happen at Sentul."

PEÑA: Fave track

SY: Another crack

After a runner-up finish in the third round in Zhuhai, China, Peña floundered in the next three races.

Sy, of Speedtech Asia, managed two third-place finishes in Zhuhai and was on his way to victory in the sixth round until he figured in a mishap with Mikola. He eventually wound up fourth.

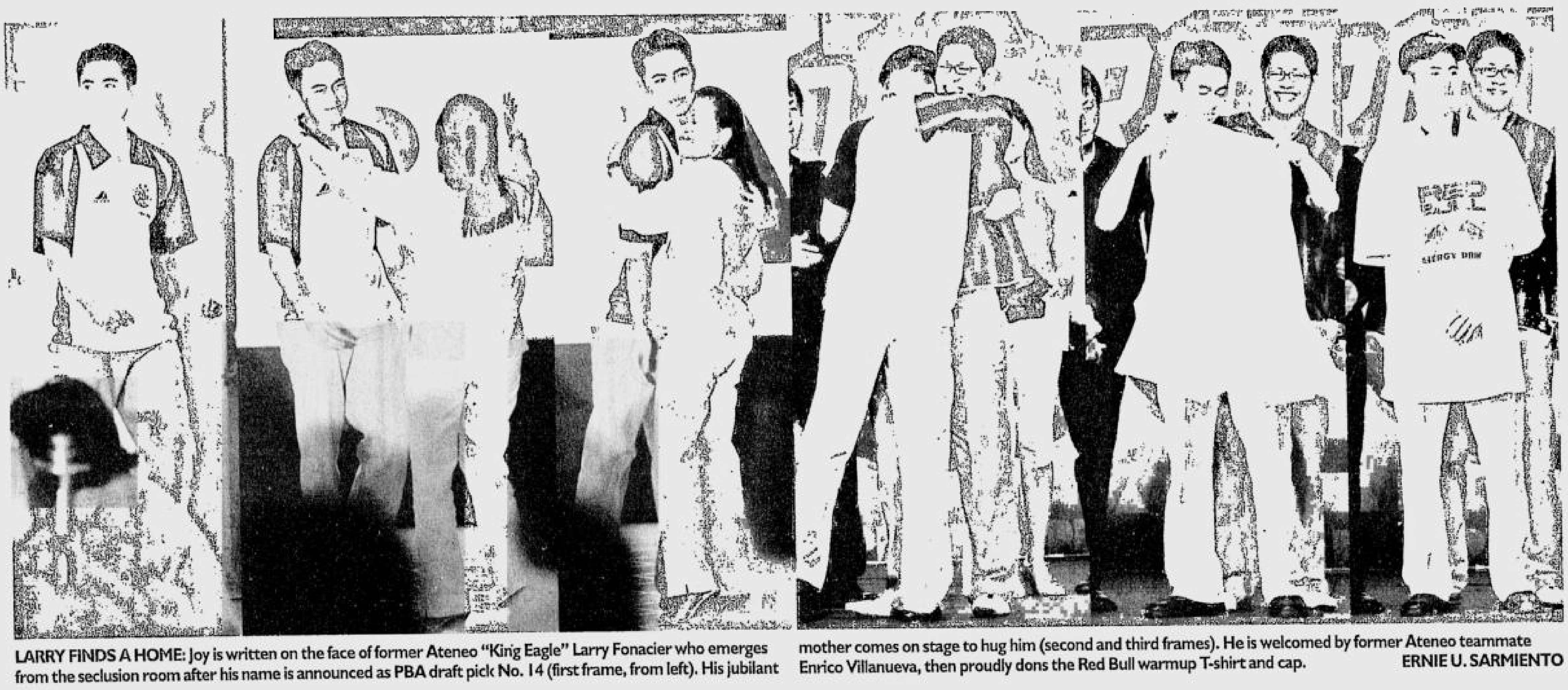
"If not for that accident with Mikola, who knows, I might have already posted my first win," said Sy. "I'll give it my best shot anew. I know I can do it."

Pepon Marave of Team Helix Kinetic PCSO is the best-placed Filipino in the field at fifth with 40 points. He trails fourth-running John O'Hara of Ireland (47), James Winslow of Britain (55), defending champion Christian Jones of Australia (62) and Mikola.

Jones, owner of the Christian Jones Motorsport team, will be back after missing the last two rounds in Zhuhai. The Australian is unlikely to finish the year in AF3 since he is almost certain to drive for Australia in the new A1 Grand Prix.

Mikola's biggest challenge could come from James Winslow of Shell Helix Kinetic PCSO who finally ended a winless spell in the last round in Zhuhai, and another Shell Helix driver, O'Hara, who finished second to Winslow the last time around.

In all, 16 drivers are expected on the grid this Sunday, for both rounds. Practice runs will start on Wednesday, with the battle for pole position set on Friday.


LARRY FINDS A HOME: Joy is written on the face of former Ateneo "King Eagle" Larry Fonacier who emerges from the seclusion room after his name is announced as PBA draft pick No. 14 (first frame, from left). His jubilant mother comes on stage to hug him (second and third frames). He is welcomed by former Ateneo teammate Enrico Villanueva, then proudly dons the Red Bull warmup T-shirt and cap. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Realtors set to sign No. 2 overall pick

By June Navarro

WHILE No. 1 overall rookie pick Anthony Washington is still fighting for a slot in the Air21 Express roster, Sta. Lucia Realty has already assured Alex Cabagnot a juicy three-year contract.

Sta. Lucia Realty governor Buddy Encarnado said the 6-foot-1 Cabagnot, chosen second overall in the PBA Rookie Draft last Sunday, would get an initial pact which will run until the 2007-2008 season.

"We've seen his potential and I think he's (Çabagnot) worth it," Encarnado told the INQUIRER.

The fórmer PBA chair, however, declined to reveal the financial terms of Sta. Lucia's offer to the former University of Hawaii-Hilo standout.

"He definitely deserves a good deal, but I would rather not delve on the financial terms of the offer yet," said Encarnado.

As a first-rounder, Cabagnot is entitled to the maximum rookie monthly salary of P150,000 in his first year, exclusive of perks and bonuses.

Cabagnot's monthly take could increase by 20 percent in each of the succeeding years of his contract, depending on the agreement reached with the Realtors.

Sta. Lucia coach Alfrancis Chua said Cabagnot would beef up the Realtors' point-guard rotation together with Paolo Mendoza and Gilbert Demape.

Fluent in Tagalog, the 22-year-old Cabagnot was born in Quezon City. His family migrated to the United States when he was in high school.

Charlie Dy, Cabagnot's agent, said contract negotiations will begin today. Dy also handles Washington and third overall choice Dennis Miranda of Coca-Cola.

Air21 Express coach Bo Perasol said they are still evaluating how Washington, Mac Cardona and Nino Canaleta, the other rookies the team picked in the draft, would best fit in the lineup.

"Personally, I want these players in the team," said Perasol. "We will come up with the decision on Wednesday."

Jondan Salvador, Purefoods' fourth overall choice, has yet to get an offer from his mother team, and so is Miranda.

The drafted rookies have seven working days to secure a pact with their teams or they will be considered unrestricted rookie free agents.

CABAGNOT ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Ideal 10-team cast still a target

EALA

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball Association is still hoping to reach the ideal number of 10 teams when the league's 2005-06 season unfurls on Oct. 2 at the Araneta Coliseum.

"It may be too much to ask of anybody, but we remain open to any discussion regarding a new membership," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala.

Although the opening of the PBA's 31st season is barely two months away, Eala said it is never too late for a company interested in a pro franchise.

Shell took a leave of absence for one year, reducing the member teams to nine.

Eala said the league is holding exploratory talks with at least two interested parties, adding that one is a conglomerate with "not a very big consumer product."

He said concessions will be offered to a new member but doubted if any deal could be reached before Oct. 2.

Harbour Centre came close to taking over Shell's franchise. The negotiations bogged down, however, and the Turbochargers traded their top players to other teams.

Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero said they would join the PBA next year.

June Navarro

With Tiger, nothing's impossible

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

IF ONLY because he leaped from 113th place to a tie for third, Tiger Woods proved once more he's a cut above the rest.

If only because he made the cut when he needed to and then still managed to storm into the leaderboard—of a major at that—Tiger Woods proved once more he's probably not from Planet Earth.

What do you think? E.T. means Exemplary Tiger?

He may not win the lightning-delayed PGA Championship which hopes to finish its 87th edition today. But the fact Woods had managed to still contend in spite of being dead last among 80 or so qualifiers going to the weekend was something you just couldn't sneeze at.

The guy is E.T. period. Extraterrestrial Tiger, if you want.

After a near-disastrous 5-over-par 75 in Round 1, Woods shot 69 with a last-hole birdie to make it to the weekend. He followed up a 66 with a 68 yesterday, moving him, at minus-2, two shots behind leader Phil Mickelson.

But Mickelson still has 5 holes left to play today. Australian Steve Elkington has 3 holes remaining in a tie at minus-3 with Thomas Bjorn, who has 4 holes to cover today to complete the tournament.

Woods at minus-2 is tied with Davis Love III, the 1997 winner, and Vijay Singh, the winner in 1998 and 2004.

But Singh has 3 holes left to play, Love 5.

Two-time US Open champion Retief Goosen lurks at minus-1 with 2 holes left to play.

Of the contenders, only Bjorn, aside from Woods, hit over-par rounds previously—71-71—before rewriting history with his third-round 63.

I say Woods will most likely lose it and will be lucky, indeed, if he winds up second or third, even in the Top 5.

But you can never tell. Against an E.T. like Woods, nothing's impossible. Did he not birdie 17 and 18 yesterday to nab his 68?

Ask him. Is he not surprised that a victory may yet happen and all too suddenly, he becomes the 87th winner since James M. Barnes won the first PGA in 1916 at Siwanoy Country Club in Bronxville, New York?

"No, I'm not," he said. "The only reason I say that is because it's a major championship. And if you shoot good rounds in the 60's, you move up the board."

Get the drift?

***

Here's one for a dear friend from way back. A new model from Reebok will soon hit town, according to Ayet Sinchongco.

If you will recall, Reebok introduced the original Pump performance shoe in 1989 and within four years sold more than 20 million pairs.

Reebok will introduce shortly the ATR Pump, a throwback to the original Pump shoe Boston Celtics guard Dee Brown wore to win the Slam-Dunk Contest in 1991.

The new Pump is being used by current NBA greats Allen Iverson and Yao Ming (Houston Rockets), Kenyon Martin (Denver Nuggets), Steve Francis (Orlando Magic), Baron Davis (Hornets), Shaun Livingston (Los Angeles Clippers), and Jerome Williams (New York Knicks).

Ayet, the best friend of my fellow journalist Dick, said the new Reebok, distributed by RSH Marketing, will soon be available at SM Megamall, North Edsa, Sucat, Shangri-La Plaza, Festival Supermall, The Shoe Shop in Rockwell and all Royal Sporting House outlets.

As the late Sen. Rene Cayetano once said to me: "For a friend, there's nothing I won't do."

***

Below is a letter from Dr. Reynaldo C. de Castro Jr. setting the record straight regarding Purefoods' entry into the PBA. He is the OIC, Section of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology of the Philippine Children's Medical Center.

"Dear Mr. Mendoza,

"I am a follower of your column and at the same time a Tanduay-Purefoods fan since 1988. If you will not mind, let me correct some errors in your column.

"First, the Purefoods team joined the PBA sans Alvin Patrimonio who still had some problems with his contract with Swift. He joined the team in the Reinforced circa 1988.

"Second, the team was first coached by El Presidente (Ramon Fernandez) and not Baby Dalupan. It was in 1990 that the team won its first of 6 championships, this time under Dalupan. That was the Reinforced Conference with Darryl Queenan and another import named Rose. Purefoods won over Alaska in a classic overtime duel. The team won its first All Filipino crown in 1991 under Ely Capacio and not in 1987.

"I hope this will help. More power to your column and good day to you and your family."

Thank you very much, Dr. de Castro, and regards to your loved ones, too.

***

E-mail: menju@pldtdsl.net

SPORTSWATCH

Six gymnasts plunge into action in India

SIX Filipino gymnasts, all potential gold medalists in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games in November, left yesterday to compete in the India Independence Cup which fires off today in Hyderabad. The gymnasts are composed of women's artistic gymnastics standouts Emille Christa Santos, Cintamoni de Guzman and Caissa Saguisag and their male counterparts Roel Ramirez, Al Ramirez and Brydon Sy. They were accompanied by coaches Tony Valenzuela and Sonny Ty. Aside from the Philippines and host India, other teams vying in the competitions are SEAG countries Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia and Asian superpowers China, Japan and Korea, as well as Iran and Kazakhstan.

P500,000 at stake in Daang-Hari derby

A PRIZE pot of P500,000 is up for grabs in the Fastest Win Once-Cock Ulutan tomorrow at the Daang-Hari Coliseum in Pasong Buaya II, Imus, Cavite. The derby, hosted by Paeng Arciaga and Bigboy and Preco Reyes, follows the 348-entry P1 million One-Cock Ulutan recently won by MR Chong of Muntinlupa whose entry posted 11.48 seconds. Entry fee is P1,650, with the first 10 winners getting P1,000 each. Cockpit owner Itan Veluz said the derby will start at 7 a.m. For inquiries, call 0918-7147923 or 0919-3509179.

Cainta Coliseum opens Thursday

A FASTEST Win One-Cock Ulutan with a total prize purse of P300,000 will follow the grand opening of the New Cainta Coliseum, the biggest cockfighting venue in Rizal province on Thursday. Entry fee is P1,500. The first 10 placers will get one 14-inch color TV, with the 11th to 20th fastest taking home a mountain bike each. The fastest-win champion will get P68,000, second placer P35,000, third P20,000, fourth P10,000 and a refrigerator, and fifth P10,000. Prizes will also be won by the sixth to 20th placers. The coliseum management is headed by Sam Mendoza and assisted by popular promoter Aba Badiola. Mendoza and Badiola will host a P500,000 5-stag derby on Aug. 30. For inquiries, call 655-3334, 0921-5191962 or 0917-9992262.

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Canta Libre 2. La Loma King 3. Heart of My Soul 4. Paris Fantasy
Race 2—1. Western Dancer 2. Wings to Fly 3. Milled Forever 4. Zero Gravity
Race 3—1. Crowning Glory/Real Storm 2. Tres Jeune 3. Stormgauge/Colombia Breeze 4. Dark Desert
Race 4—1. Transparent 2. Presidentiable 3 Do It David 4. Kim Possible 5. Run Like D Wind 6. Red Bells
Race 5—1. Nureyev Heiross 2. Aminin 3. Beat D Heat 4. Besame Mucho
Race 6—1. Carmelita 2. Queen Josephine 3. Demolition Jack 4. Dazzling Affair 5. Golden Harry
Race 7—1. Prickly Heat 2. Princess Sarah/Archer 3. Replica 4. El Montruo
Race 8—1. Feng Shui 2. Fastteller 3. All Class 4. Tiger Winnie 5. Yankee Clipper 6. Don Ramon

Nadal flashes hardcourt savvy, trips Agassi for 3rd title in row

MONTREAL—Rafael Nadal won on a hardcourt for the first time, beating 35-year-old Andre Agassi, 6-3, 4-6, 6-2, to win the Rogers Cup on Sunday.

The 19-year-old Spaniard left-handed shotmaking subdued Agassi, who was missing the lines in a baseline battle interrupted 58 minutes after the first set by rain.

It was the top-seed's third victory in a row and his ATP-leading ninth tournament win of the year. His eight previous wins, including the French Open, were on slower clay courts.

The French Open champ, who has a 16-match winning streak, won $400,000 (euro 321,100) of the $2.45 million (euro1.98 million) purse while Agassi earned $200,000 (euro 160,550).

Fourth-seeded Agassi, who was coming off a win in Los Angeles two weeks ago, ended a 10-match winning streak.

It was the first meeting between Nadal and Agassi, who has won 60 tournaments, including eight grand slams and three wins in the Canadian event, in his 19-year career.

The 16-year age gap between finalists was the largest on the ATP tour since 1979, when 35-year-old Tom Okker beat 19-year-old Per Hjertquist in Tel Aviv.

Nadal's tour-leading 65 match wins this year is second best ever by a teenager to Boris Becker's 69 in 1986. *AP*

RAFAEL Nadal jubilates after beating Andre Agassi in the final of the Rogers Cup. AP

US track bets take 14 golds

HELSINKI, Finland—The Stars and Stripes flew highest when dusk descended one last time on the athletics World Championships.

After two years of doping scandals, the United States hit back at critics with a record-breaking 14-gold medal performance, highlighted Sunday with a second gold for 400 champion Jeremy Wariner in the 1,600 relay.

Together with 100 and 200 champion Justin Gatlin and 100 and 400 relay champion Lauryn Williams, Wariner epitomized a young and spectacularly talented US squad which could dominate the sport even beyond the 2007 World Championships and up to the 2008 Olympics.

"The average age of the gold medalists is 23.5 so when you're thinking about moving forward to Beijing and Osaka before that, you have to feel pretty good about that," USA Track and Field executive director Craig Masback said.

On a busy closing day, Britain and Kenya averted humiliation by winning their first gold medals. Britain's hard-luck marathon runner Paula Radcliffe won her first major title and Benjamin Limo made sure Ethiopia would not sweep the long-distance races on the track.

Cuban Olympic champion Osleidys Menendez set a javelin world record of 71.70 meters on her first throw, improving on her old mark by 16 centimeters, to win the gold.

She was the third woman to win $160,000 (euro 128,440) for setting a world record and winning gold. Olimpiada Ivanova set one in the 20-kilometer walk and fellow Russian Yelena Isinbayeva added another in the pole vault. The three world records were the most at a World Championships in a decade and the lack of a major doping scandal left the IAAF with fond memories of the Finnish capital. *AP*

Phil retains lead as storm halts PGA Championship

PHIL Mickelson pumps his fist after making a birdie on the 13th hole. REUTERS

SPRINGFIELD, New Jersey—Phil Mickelson ended Sunday on top of the US PGA Championship leaderboard but left without a title after a second lightning suspension forced the year's final major into a Monday finish.

With lightning crackling around Baltusrol Golf Club, officials sounded the horns to clear the Lower Course before announcing that play would resume the following day at 10:05 a.m.

The 87th US PGA Championship was still wide open for the taking, though, with eight players bunched within three strokes of Mickelson's lead at four under par with five holes remaining.

Three of them, including world number one Tiger Woods at two under, were safely in the clubhouse.

Tied for second at three under were Australian Steve Elkington, the 1995 US PGA champion, and Thomas Bjorn of Denmark, bidding to become the first European to win the tournament since Scotland-born Tommy Armour 75 years ago.

Elkington had finished 15 holes and Bjorn was through 14.

TIGER Woods falls on his knees after missing a birdie putt on the 16th hole. AP

"I love this championship, but I want to live," said Mickelson, who faced a three-foot putt for par on the 14th green before being hustled off as lightning flashed above the course.

Defending champion Vijay Singh and 1997 winner Davis Love III will also be back on Monday, lurking just two shots off the lead with three and five holes to play, respectively.

After battling to a two-under-par 68 to finish at two-under 278, twice champion Woods will also have to extend his stay in New Jersey if the tournament goes into a three-hole playoff.

It is the first time the US PGA Championship has been forced into a Monday finish since 1986 at Inverness, where American Bob Tway holed out from a bunker on the 72nd hole to beat Greg Norman by two shots.

Sunday's stormy finish at Baltusrol was a fitting conclusion to a turbulent day on the leaderboard.

Love and Mickelson, joint leaders overnight at six under, both struggled for accuracy off the tee in their respective bids to secure a second career major.

Mickelson looked in imperious command when surging into a three-shot lead after four holes before bogeys on six, seven, nine and 10 sent him tumbling down the leaderboard.

With storm clouds building, the American left-hander rolled in a 12-foot putt for birdie on 13 to get back to two over for the day and in sole possession of the lead at four under.

Woods's bid to mount a last-day charge was slow to spark as he bogeyed two of the first three holes to slip eight strokes back.

Chances of a third US PGA title seemed remote as Woods reached the turn but three birdies on the back nine, including 17 and 18, earned him a 68 and left him in the clubhouse waiting to see if the leaders would come back to him. *Reuters*

'Grand . . .

From page A23

pine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco and Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez.

Cojuangco and Ramirez enjoy the support of POC chair Robert Aventajado and vice president Rep. Monico Puentevella in running the Philsoc.

Puentevella reportedly had a heated argument with Pagdanganan last week prior to the revamp.

Also in the Philsoc's to-do list are plans to attract top corporations, including giants PLDT, San Miguel Corp., the Lucio Tan Group of Companies, Nestlé, Fed-Ex and Unilab, to support the Games.

The same insider said some corporations are ready to help but wary of the bad publicity the Games is getting. PLDT, for instance, balked at fully backing the Games after its mobile phone arm, Smart Communications, was locked out of the Games because of the P100-million deal that Globe Telecoms had signed with the Philsoc.

So far, the Philsoc has received a pledge of P300 million from the Office of the President, P150 million from lawmakers and P100 million from Globe, among the major sponsors. The Philsoc still needs at least P400 million more.

VASILEIOS Xanthopoulos cries after his Greek team bows to Lithuania, 65-63. AP

Lithuania five tops world under-21

MAR DEL PLATA—Lithuania won the gold medal after defeating Greece, 65-63, in a thrilling Final game of the FIBA U21 World Championship 2005 in Mar Del Plata, Argentina.

During the entire game, no team could take more than a 5-point lead and the public had to wait until the very last second to have a chance to know the winners.

Both teams were still tie 63-63 with 26 seconds to go.

Earlier, J.J. Redick scored a game-high 22 points to lead the United States over Argentina, 111-85, for fifth place.

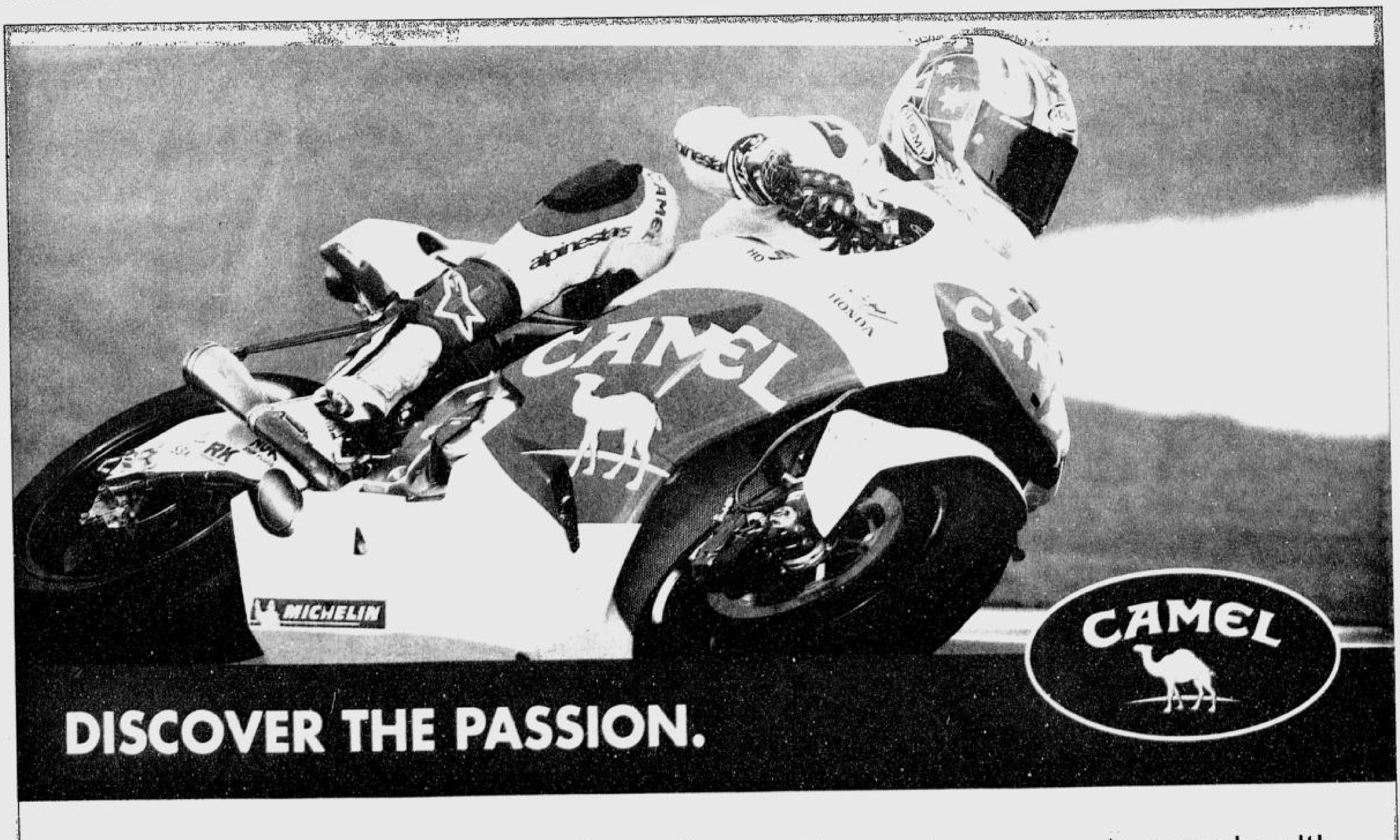
Canada led 76-74 with 30 seconds remaining when Garry Gallimore secured the victory with three consecutive free throws.

Brad Newley had 17 points for Australia, which finished 6-2.

In the US victory, American Justin Gray also scored 16 points as the US finished 7-1, its only loss in overtime to Canada in the quarterfinals on Friday when Kendall had a tournament-high 40 points.

The US outrebounded Argentina 43-29 as the Americans shot more three-pointers and outmaneuvered the host while racing to a 61-29 halftime lead. Leonardo Mainoldi had 21 points for Argentina, which finished the tournament 5-3.

Jesus Verdejo had 19 points to help Puerto Rico to an 86-77 victory over Slovenia for seventh place. *AP*



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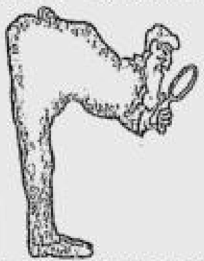

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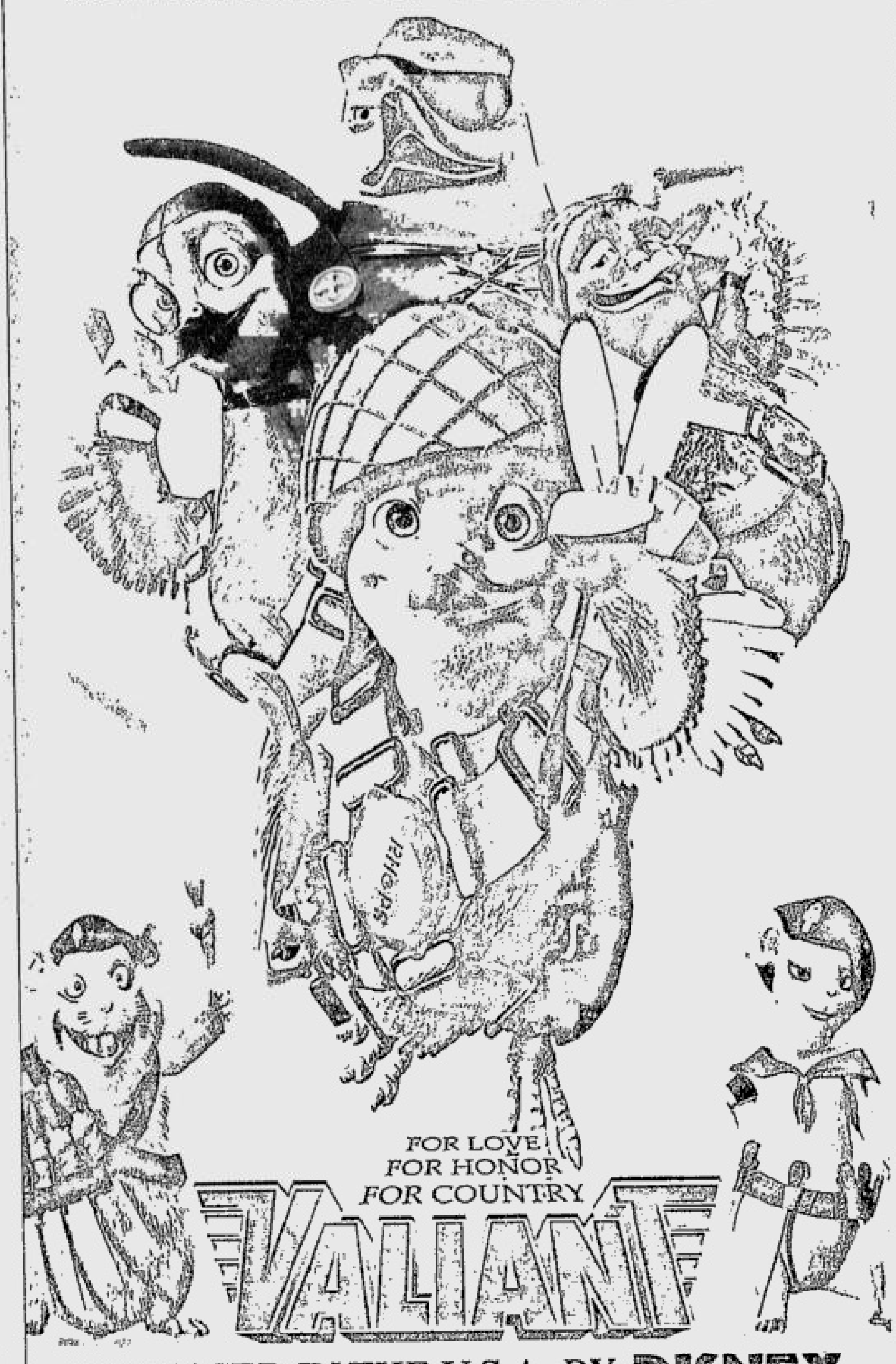

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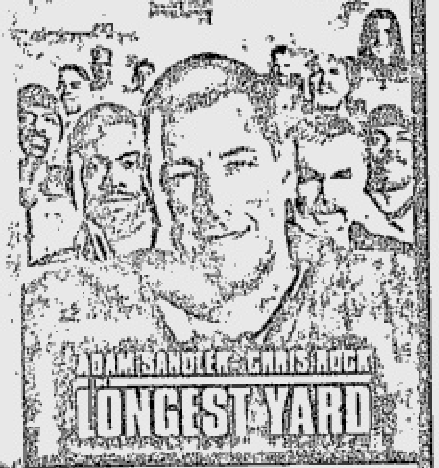

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Sunday NU vs UP Srs 2pm FEU vs DLSU Srs 4pm

MTV PILIPINAS 2005 AWARDS
August 25, Thursday 8 pm

CUSA BASKETBALL LEAGUE
August 26, Friday OPENING GAMES

Aug 27 UST vs Adu Jrs 9:30am ADMU vs UE Jrs 11:30am
Sunday UST vs Adu Srs 2pm ADMU vs UE Srs 4pm

CENTER EVENTS

SALE EVENTS	***Oxygen*** *at the 2nd Floor of Farmers Plaza,* ***Guess*** *at the Upper Ground Floor of Ali Mall, and* ***Marks & Spencer*** *at the Upper Ground Floor of Gateway Mall*
EXHIBIT	***Polo Air Exhibit*** *ongoing until August 30 at the Level 2 LRT Concourse Area of Gateway Mall*
PERFORMANCES	***Cool Live Jazz*** *at the Gateway Drive from 9 to 11pm featuring* ***Guarana*** *on August 19 and* ***Eddie K & Tropicana*** *on August 20*

LOG ON TO www.aranetacenter.net FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEEKLY E-MAIL ENTERTAINMENT UPDATES

SHOW TIME

Rockestra

WHEN an immovable object like classical music meets an irresistible force like indie rock, the results are nothing short of explosive.

"Rockestra" brings together six of Manila's finest rock bands and the prestigious Manila Symphony Orchestra.

Imago, Cambio, Sandwich, Silent Sanctuary, Sugarfree and Twisted Halo will share the stage with MSO in a mind-blowing collaboration set Aug. 19 at the Tanghalang Francisco Balagtas (formerly Folk Arts Theater), 7:30 p.m.

Bayang Umawit

"BAYANG Umawit," a concert celebrating the evolution of 40 years of Philippine liturgical music since Vatican 2, will be held Aug. 20, with a 3 p.m. matinee and a 7:30 p.m. gala at the AFP Theater, Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

The concert features Noel Cabangon, Cookie Chua, Jett Pangan, May Bayot and an 80-person choir with the Bukas Palad Music Ministry, Pansol Choir, Hangad, Barangka Choir, Middle C, the Ateneo Chamber Singers, resident artists of the Jesuit Music Ministry and an octet of violin, cello, flute, viola and piano.

Call 426-5971 to 72 or 426-6101 local 3425.

Tonight

"FOLLIES de Mwah!" at **Club Mwah!**. Call 535-7943.

Cool Change at **Bykes Café**, Makati City. Call 750-0622.

Marmaladeat Manila Pavilion's Boulvar Lounge

Side A at **Tavern on the Square**

Silk at **Suburbia**

Nina at **Dencio's Capitol**

Elvis Nite: Commemorating The King's 28th Death Anniversary featuring **Edgar Opida, Richie Barangananand Ed Abayariat RJ's Guitar Bar** , 9 p.m. Call 899-1658.

'Where are …

From page A30

makulit. I'm proud of Carl [but] I simply try my best to excel in my own field and make my Mama proud.

What's your fondest memory as a kid actor?

I loved my *aswang* movies, especially "Shake, Rattle and Roll 4." I enjoyed watching other actors put on prosthetics.

What are your expectations about your comeback?

I know there'll be a lot of intrigues. I know how to handle them, though. My mom has taught me well.

I hope audiences will still support me.

What about your studies?

I plan to enroll next school year. I'll be a freshman at OB Montessori. I want to take up either advertising or journalism. I used to be editor in chief of a school paper, Fully Loaded, printed on pink paper. *O 'di ba?*

The 'mobile' film is here

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHEN a well-heeled friend showed me last year how his cell phone not only took photos but shot video footage as well, I joked that the day wouldn't be far off when entire movies would be shot, not with a movie camera, but with a phone.

We laughed over that crack—but now, it turns out that it was no laughing matter: "mobile" phone movies are about to make their appearance on the film horizon!

Discovery Networks Asia and Nokia are reinventing the concept of filmmaking by providing mobile phone users with access to knowledge and technology of a new genre—mobile filmmaking. They have launched Mobile First Time Filmmakers 2005, a competition that offers a grand prize of $10,000.

To join, send a photo or a video no longer than nine seconds, and a brief description of a favorite icon that best defines the values and hope of your community, and how this will be presented in a short mobile film.

Contestants may send in storyboards to support their entries. More information is available at www.mobifilms.net. Closing date for submission is Sunday, Sept. 4.

Fifteen applicants will be flown to Singapore in September to attend a special workshop to learn more about mobile filmmaking techniques. They will each also receive a Nokia N90, which they will use to shoot and submit their entries.

Using the Nokia N90 high-performance multimedia device that comes with optics from Carl Zeiss, consumers now have the ability to create their own high-quality personal mobile films. This technological advancement can contribute to the evolution and growth of documentary filmmaking.

Film festivals seen in perspective

IT'S quite understandable that local movie producers and filmmakers make a big deal about their productions being screened in international film fests.

To put things in perspective, we should remind ourselves that there are major festivals and minor ones, film fests that are highly specialized, commercially oriented festivals and those that go for art films—and all sorts of programming or competition thrusts in between!

In addition, we should realize that there are literally hundreds of film fests held all over the world every year. So, merely getting into a festival isn't all that great an achievement, and certainly not a one-way ticket to international cinematic cachet, fame and fortune, etc.

These are just some of the film festivals set in different parts of the world through October this year:

Aug. 15 to 18, Australian Movie Competition, Gold Coast, Australia. Aug. 15 to 20, Festival de Gramado, Cinema Brasileiro e Latino, Brazil.

Aug. 17 to 28, Edinburgh International Film Festival, UK. Aug. 26 to Sept. 5, Montreal World Film Festival, Canada. Aug. 18 to 28, Copenhagen International Film Festival, Denmark.

Aug. 22 to Sept. 4, Budapest Cinematography Festival, Hungary. Aug. 21 to Sept. 10, Venice International Film Festival, Italy. Sept. 5 to 12, London Black Filmmaker International Film Festival, UK.

Sept. 8 to 17, Toronto International Film Festival, Canada. Sept. 9 to 13, IBC International Conference and Exhibition, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Sept. 15 to 24, San Sebastian International Film Festival, Spain.

Sept. 18 to 25, Athens International Film Festival, Greece. Sept. 28 to Oct. 2, The Woodstock Film Festival, New York, USA. Sept. 29 to Oct. 14, Vancouver International Film Festival, Canada.

So, the next time you hear that a Filipino movie has gotten into an international film fest, don't get automatically dazzled, and remember: Context and track record are everything.

Cinemanila

TAKE note of the fact that the Cinemanila International Film Festival will be held from Oct. 12 to 25. Do sample the annual film fest's choice offerings, once the festival's screening schedule is announced.

New musical

A RECITAL of songs from "Lor Indios Bravos," a new musical by **Jose Capino** and **Von de Guzman,** will be held today at the Escolar Hall of Ateneo de Manila University. Call 426-6001, local 5320.

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CINEMA 1 THE GREAT RAID PG13 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:50
CINEMA 2 BEWITCHED GP 11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40
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PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 CHARLIE & the CHOCOLATE FACTORY • GP 11:50, 2:25, 5:00, 7:35, 10:10
CINEMA 4 LONGEST YARD • PG13 Advance Screening 11:50, 2:25, 5:00, 7:35, 10:10
CINEMA 5 BEWITCHED GP 11:40, 2:20, 5:00 7:40, 10:20

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM
September 2 & 3 MOJO FLY 8:30PM
Sept 15,22,23,24 JOAQUIN & FAITH CUNETA "ONE" 9PM
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SHANG CINEPLEX

1 THE GREAT RAID MTRCB. PG-13 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00 LMF
2 BEWITCHED MTRCB GP 12 00, 2 30, 5 00, 7 30 10 00 LMF
3 THE LONGEST YARD MTRCB PG-13 12:00, 2 30, 5 00, 7 30, 10:00
4 BEWITCHED MTRCB GP 11 30, 2 00, 4 30, 7:00, 9:30

PREMIERE THEATRE CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
MTRCB GP 4 40, 7 20, 10 00 LMF
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GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 THE GREAT RAID 11:55, 2:45, 5:35 8:25, 11:00 PG-13
2 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY 12:30, 3:10, 5:50 8:30, 11:00 GP
3 BEWITCHED 12:50, 3:20, 5:50 8:20, 10:50 GP
4 THE LONGEST YARD SNEAK PREVIEW 1:05, 3:35, 6:05 8:35, 11:00 PG-13

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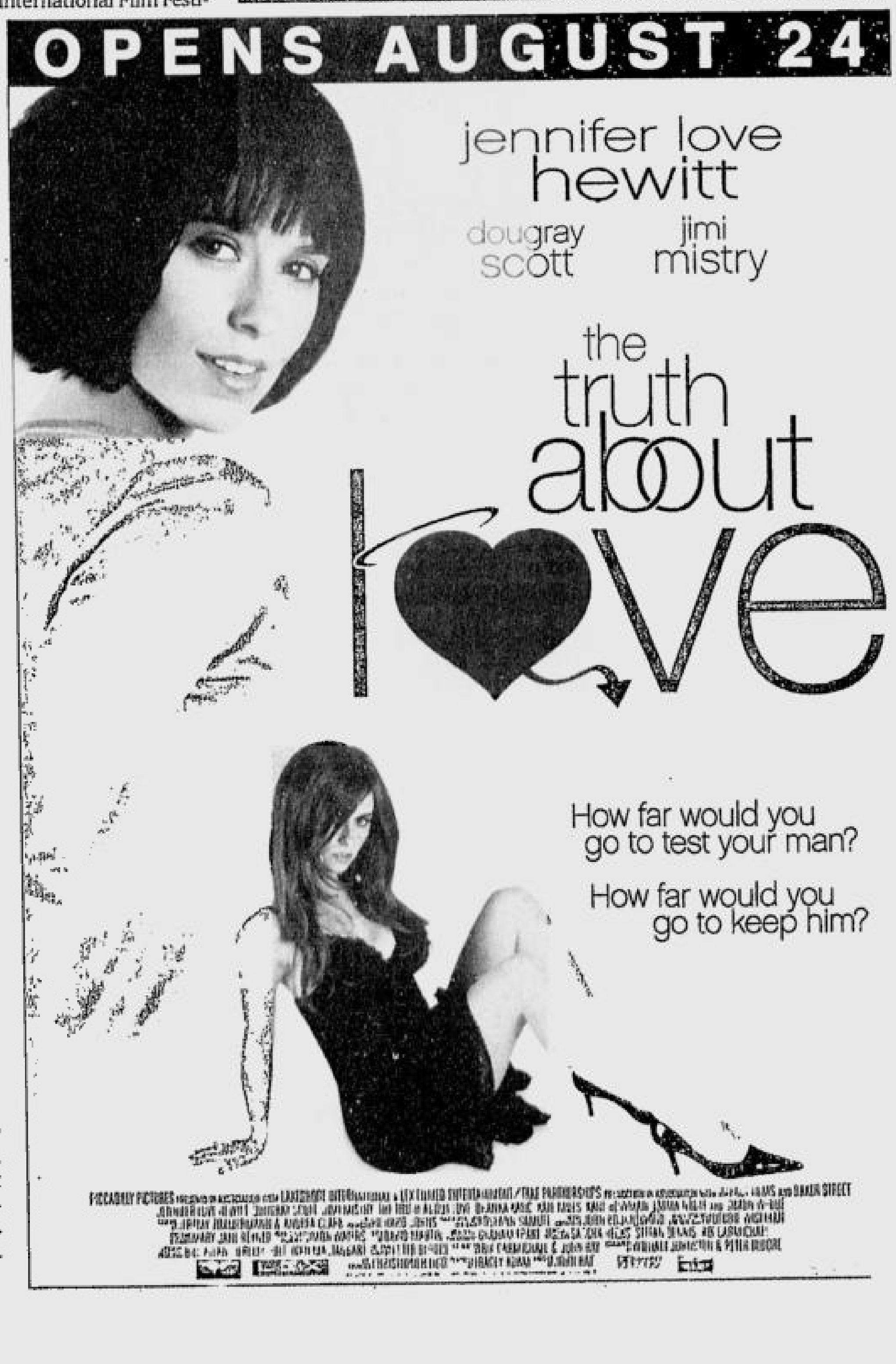
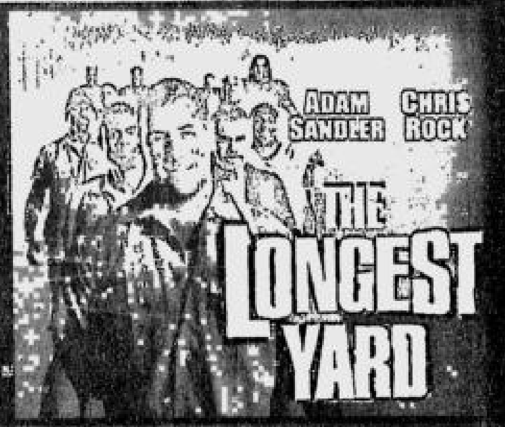
BEWITCHED GP 1:25,3:45,6:05,8:25	CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY GP 12:10,2:40,5:10, 7:40,10:10	GREAT RAID PG13 12:00,2:40,5:20, 8:00,10:30
LONGEST YARD PG13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30	WEDDING CRASHERS PG13 12:00,2:30,5:00, 7:30,10:00	BEWITCHED GP 12:55,3:15,5:35, 7:55,10:15



OPENS AUGUST 24
jennifer love hewitt
dougray scott
jimi mistry
the truth about love
How far would you go to test your man?
How far would you go to keep him?

EVENTS SCHEDULES PROMOS
NOW SHOWING at SM CINEMA
movietime

SNEAK PREVIEW



ADAM SANDLER CHRIS ROCK
THE LONGEST YARD

IT'S THE PRISONERS VS. THE GUARDS
When former NFL player Paul Crewe was sent to prison, the warden forced him to transform a diverse group of inmates into a football team. The inmates unite and was surprised to find out who'll they beat for the home run: the guards themselves.
MTRCB Rating: PG 13

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Megamall
Manila
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Sucat
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FOR GUARANTEED SEATS
the podium 633-8976
1 THE LONGEST YARD
12:50FS/01:20MF/03:50/06:20
08:20LFS/09:00LMF/10:55END
2 BEWITCHED
11:20FS/11:50MF/02:05/04:20/06:35
08:20LFS/09:00LMF/10:45END

cebu (032) 231-3876
1 STEALTH
12:00FS/12 10MF/02 30/04 50/07:10
09 10LFS/09 30LMF/11 30END
2 THE ISLAND
12:00FS/12 10MF/02 30/04 50/07 10
09 20LFS/09 30LMF/11:45END
3 THE GREAT RAID
11:20FS/11 30MF/02 00/04 30/07 00
09 10LFS/09 30LMF/11 40END

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 THE GREAT RAID
5 BEWITCHED
6 STEALTH
7 WEDDING CRASHERS
8 THE LONGEST YARD
9 D' ANOTHERS
10 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
11 THE ISLAND
12 CRASH

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 ARAHAN
3 WEDDING CRASHERS
4 BEWITCHED
5 D'ANOTHERS
6 THE LONGEST YARD
7 THE GREAT RAID
8 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
9 STEALTH
10 THE EYE INFINITY
11 IF ONLY
12 THE ISLAND

SM NORTH EDSA
1 BEWITCHED
2 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
3 D' ANOTHERS
4 THE EYE INFINITY
5 THE WEDDING CRASHERS
6 STEALTH
7 THE LONGEST YARD
8 THE GREAT RAID

SM CITY MANILA
1 THE LONGEST YARD
2 BEWITCHED
3 THE ISLAND
4 THE GREAT RAID
5 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
6 STEALTH
7 ARAHAN
8 IF ONLY
9 D' ANOTHERS
10 CRASH
11 WEDDING CRASHERS
12 THE EYE INFINITY

SM CITY STA MESA
1 THE GREAT RAID
2 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
3 BEWITCHED
4 D' ANOTHERS
5 THE LONGEST YARD
6 THE EYE INFINITY
7 STEALTH
8 THE ISLAND
9 WEDDING CRASHERS
10 YEAR OF THE YAO

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 THE GREAT RAID
2 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
3 THE LONGEST YARD
4 BEWITCHED
5 FANTASTIC FOUR
6 ARAHAN
7 WEDDING CRASHERS
8 STEALTH
9 D' ANOTHERS
10 THE EYE INFINITY

SM SAN LAZARO
1 THE LONGEST YARD
2 BEWITCHED
3 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
4 ARAHAN
5 D' ANOTHERS
6 THE GREAT RAID

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 THE GREAT RAID
2 D' ANOTHERS
3 BEWITCHED
4 THE LONGEST YARD

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 THE LONGEST YARD
2 D' ANOTHERS
3 THE GREAT RAID
4 BEWITCHED

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 STEALTH
2 ARAHAN
3 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
4 THE EYE INFINITY
5 YEAR OF THE YAO
6 D' ANOTHERS

SM CITY BACOOR
1 ARAHAN
2 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
3 THE GREAT RAID
4 BEWITCHED
5 STEALTH
6 D' ANOTHERS
7 THE LONGEST YARD
8 THE ISLAND

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
2 D' ANOTHERS
3 YEAR OF THE YAO
4 THE EYE INFINITY

SM CITY LUCENA
1 NEW POLICE STORY
2 D' ANOTHERS
3 CAMPUS GHOST STORY
4 MONSTER-IN-LAW

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 STEALTH
2 D' ANOTHERS
3 IF ONLY
4 THE MACHINIST

SM CITY MARILAO
1 IF ONLY
2 D' ANOTHERS
3 EVIL DEAD
4 ARAHAN

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
2 D' ANOTHERS
3 STEALTH
4 EVIL DEAD

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 STEALTH
2 THE ISLAND
3 THE GREAT RAID
4 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
5 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
6 THE EYE INFINITY
7 D' ANOTHERS
8 THE MACHINIST

SM CITY ILOILO
1 EVIL DEAD
2 RESERVED
3 IF ONLY
4 D' ANOTHERS
5 YEAR OF THE YAO
6 STEALTH
7 RESERVED
8 HERBIE: FULLY LOADED

SM CITY DAVAO
1 STEALTH
2 IF ONLY
3 D' ANOTHERS
4 THE MACHINIST
5 CRASH
6 WEDDING CRASHERS

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 STEALTH
2 CAMPUS GHOST STORY
3 D' ANOTHERS
4 COACH CARTER

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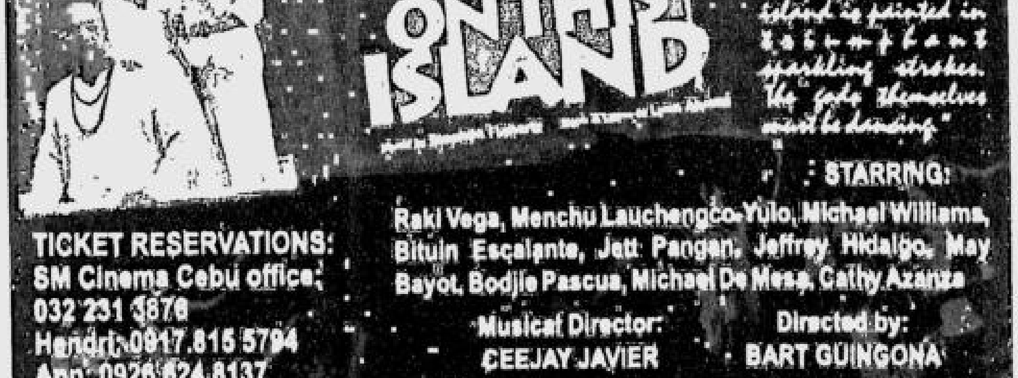

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GALLERIA
632-9118

1 STEALTH • THX 1:35 4:20 7:05 9:50	6 THE ISLAND 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
2 CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY 11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00	7 ASSASINATION OF RICHARD NIXON 12:30 2:20 4:10 6:00 7:50 9:40
3 BEWITCHED 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00	8 D' ANOTHERS 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
4 WEDDING CRASHERS 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	9 CRASH 12:15 2:45 5:15 7:45 10:00
5 THE GREAT RAID 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00	10 HERBIE: FULLY LOADED 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

ERMITA
536-7809 to 12

1 BEWITCHED	10:30 12:20 2:10 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
2 YEAR OF THE YAO 12:00 2:00 THE ISLAND 4:00 6:50 9:40	5 D' ANOTHERS 10:15 12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:50
3 CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 9:50	6 THE GREAT RAID 11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00
4 STEALTH 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	7 WEDDING CRASHERS 10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

METRO EAST
682-8193 / 682-8199

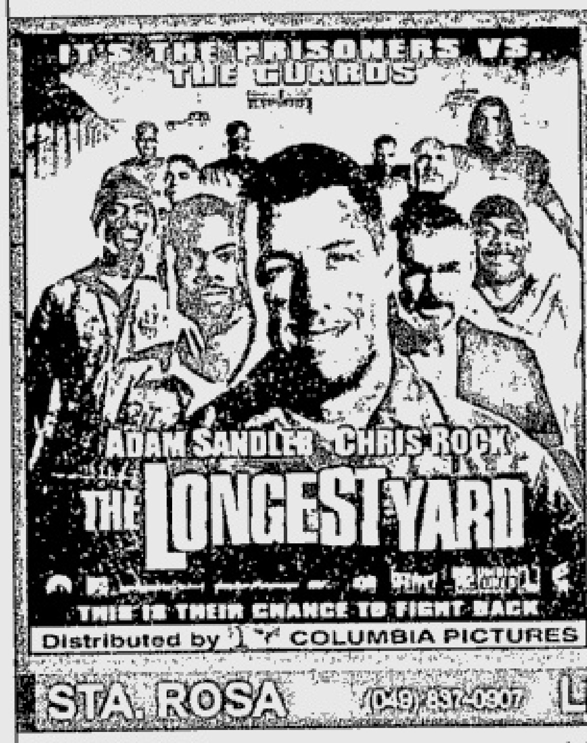
1 STEALTH 1:05 3:35 6:15 9:00	5 IF ONLY 12:00 2:10 4:20 6:35 9:00
2 THE GREAT RAID 12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00	6 BEWITCHED 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05
3 D' ANOTHERS 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00	7 CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY 12:00 2:20 4:40 7:00 9:20
4 THE ISLAND 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00	8 HERBIE: FULLY LOADED 1:40 4:00 6:20 9:00

CITISQUARE MALABON
288-2575

1 NEW POLICE STORY
2 D' ANOTHERS
3 THE GREAT RAID
4 CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

PIONEER
687-5378

1 THE GREAT RAID
2 BEWITCHED
3 STEALTH
4 CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY


IT'S THE PRISONERS VS. THE GUARDS
ADAM SANDLER CHRIS ROCK
THE LONGEST YARD
THIS IS THEIR CHANCE TO FIGHT BACK

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--at--
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august 15 & 16

mtrcb rating: PG-13

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1 YEAR OF THE YAO
2 D' ANOTHERS
3 COACH CARTER
4 SIN CITY

LIPA
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(043) 312-5870

1 STEALTH
2 IF ONLY
3 HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
4 D' ANOTHERS

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1 YEAR OF THE YAO
2 THE EYE INFINITY
3 CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
4 D' ANOTHERS

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1 CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
2 SHANGHAI LILY
3 D' ANOTHERS
4 CREEP

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(046) 471-8188

1 D' ANOTHERS
2 BEWITCHED
3 CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
4 ARAHAN

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1 D' ANOTHERS
2 YEAR OF THE YAO
3 THE EYE INFINITY
4 THE ILAND
5 CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
6 ARAHAN

BACOLOD
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(034) 441-0459

1 STEALTH
2 MONSTER-IN-LAW
3 IF ONLY
4 HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
5 NEW POLICE STORY
6 EVIL DEAD

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1 STEALTH
2 YEAR OF THE YAO
3 EVIL DEAD
4 D' ANOTHERS

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August 18 to 21, 2005 - GB 3 Lobby /
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August 14, 20, 21, 27 & 28, 2005

Ayala MUSEUM

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Online registration at www.ayalamuseum.org

AYALA CINEMAS

AYALA CINEMAS
THX

Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729 7777

G1 GLORIETTA	1 BEWITCHED	2 THE GREAT RAID	3 THE LONGEST YARD	4 D' ANOTHERS
G4 GLORIETTA	1 BEWITCHED	2 WEDDING CRASHERS	3 THX THE GREAT RAID 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 ONE LAST DANCE	5 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY	6 STEALTH	7 THE LONGEST YARD
GB1 GREENBELT	1 BEWITCHED 2:30, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00, 11:10	2 THE GREAT RAID 11:20, 1:55, 4:30, 7:05, 9:40		
GB3 GREENBELT	1 THX THE GREAT RAID 2:45, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX WEDDING CRASHERS 2:10, 4:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE.. 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE GREAT RAID 2:45, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE LONGEST YARD 1:50, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50, 11:10 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE LONGEST YARD	2 THE GREAT RAID		
	3 BEWITCHED	4 WEDDING CRASHERS	5 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GREAT RAID	2 CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY	3 THE EYE... INFINITY	4 D' ANOTHERS

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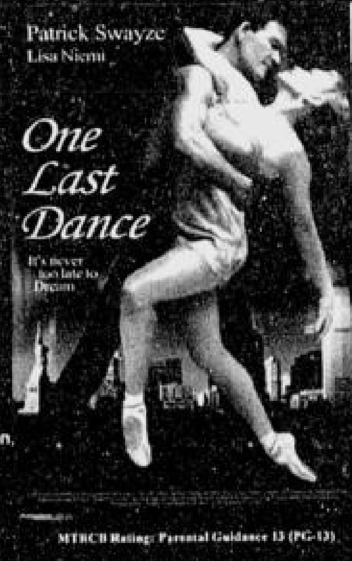

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THE LA SALLE COLLEGIAN

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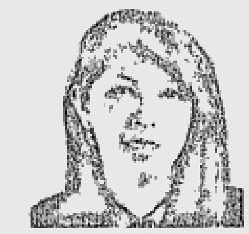
Allow me to put the Mike Tan issue to rest

DOLLY WOOD



Dolly Ann Carvajal

AFTER my previous column about **Mike Tan** lambasting my gay son IC came out, many tabloids and three talk shows ("Startalk," "S-Files," "The Buzz") picked up the story. To put the issue to rest, here's my final word on it.

Before anything else, allow me to thank all my colleagues in the business, especially *Tita* **Cristy Fermin** who took the cudgels for IC, and also all the readers who e-mailed me to express their support. Thanks for being in IC's corner and mine.

It's not just because IC is my son, that I exposed Mike Tan's arrogant attitude. It's more of a wake-up call to newcomers in the biz like Mike to not let fame and fortune go to their heads. More important, it's in sympathy for gays like IC, who get ridiculed by guys like Mike, who show no respect for gays. Tell me, doesn't it make a guy more of a "gentleman" (or a man who is gentle for that matter) to admit that he's gay, rather than a guy who does not treat other guys or gays as decent human beings?

Mike Tan has apologized to IC and me. Apology accepted. But I don't take it at face value. If Mike is really sincere in his act of contrition, it should show in the changes he will take upon himself in the long run—not just when he is in front of the cameras. Public apologies are oftentimes just a damage-control measure. It remains to be seen if Mike has learned his lesson well. If he wants to last long in show biz, he should be kind to all the people he meets on his way up 'cause they are the same people he will meet on his way down if he doesn't watch his steps.

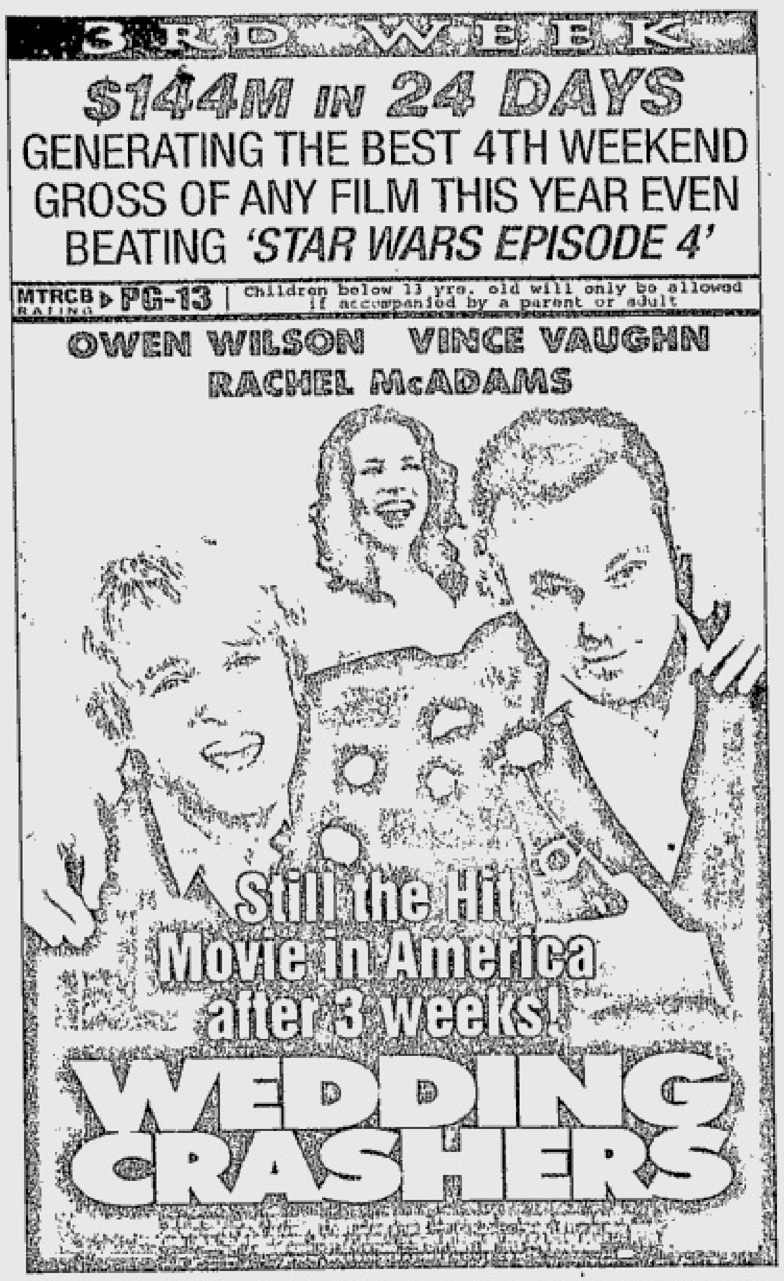
IC is no saint and neither am I. We have our faults and excesses, too. But we try not to commit the same mistakes twice. As for Mike, it's just unfortunate that after the issue on his IC-bashing hit the show biz headlines, so many people from his dark (?) past have popped out of the blue. They have their own Mike Tan horror stories to tell. I could unearth those stories if I wanted to, but that's not my style. I'm not getting back at Mike Tan. It's enough that IC's unpleasant encounter with him has served its purpose. Now that the ghosts of his past are haunting him, it's time for Mike Tan to make it up not just to IC but to all the gays he has used/insulted during his struggling years. After all the "Sorrys" have been said and done, will Mike Tan end up just being sorry for himself?

PERSONAL: Happy B-day, F.A. Sweetness is a gift you were born with. Here's to you!

(For feedback, e-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com.)

DID YOU KNOW...

The San Miguel Beer commercial that shows **Kris Aquino** driving a Ferrari actually had **Mylo Mesina**, a business management graduate and a professional commercial model, at the wheel. Mylo shot the scenes (driving and getting off the sports car) in Balara, Quezon City, and Clark, Pampanga.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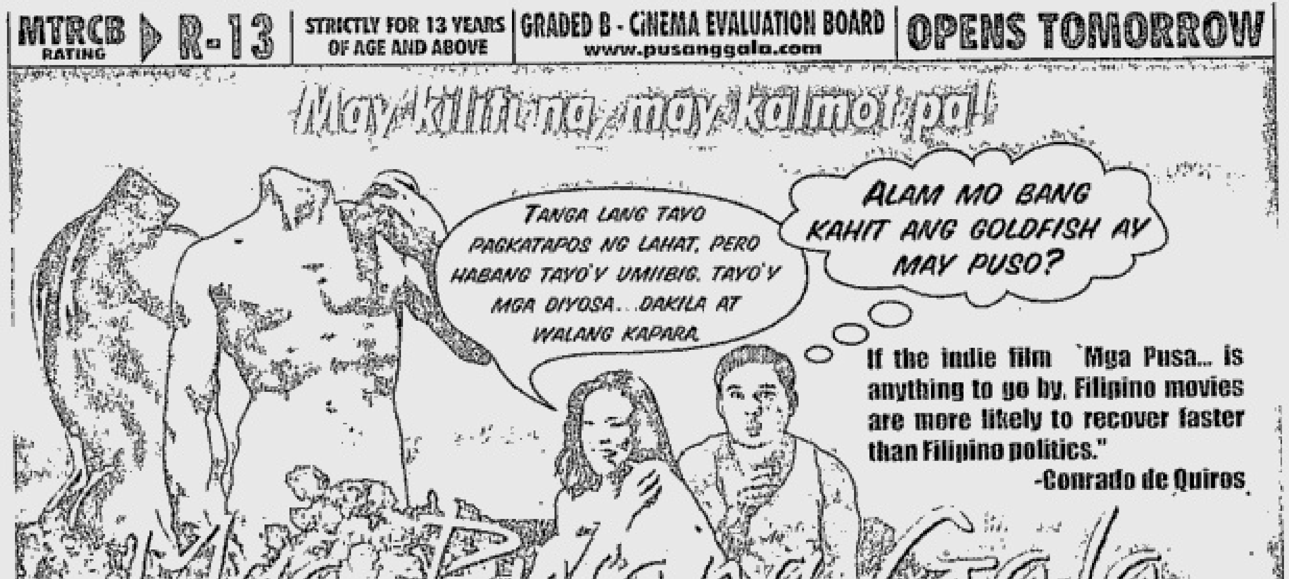
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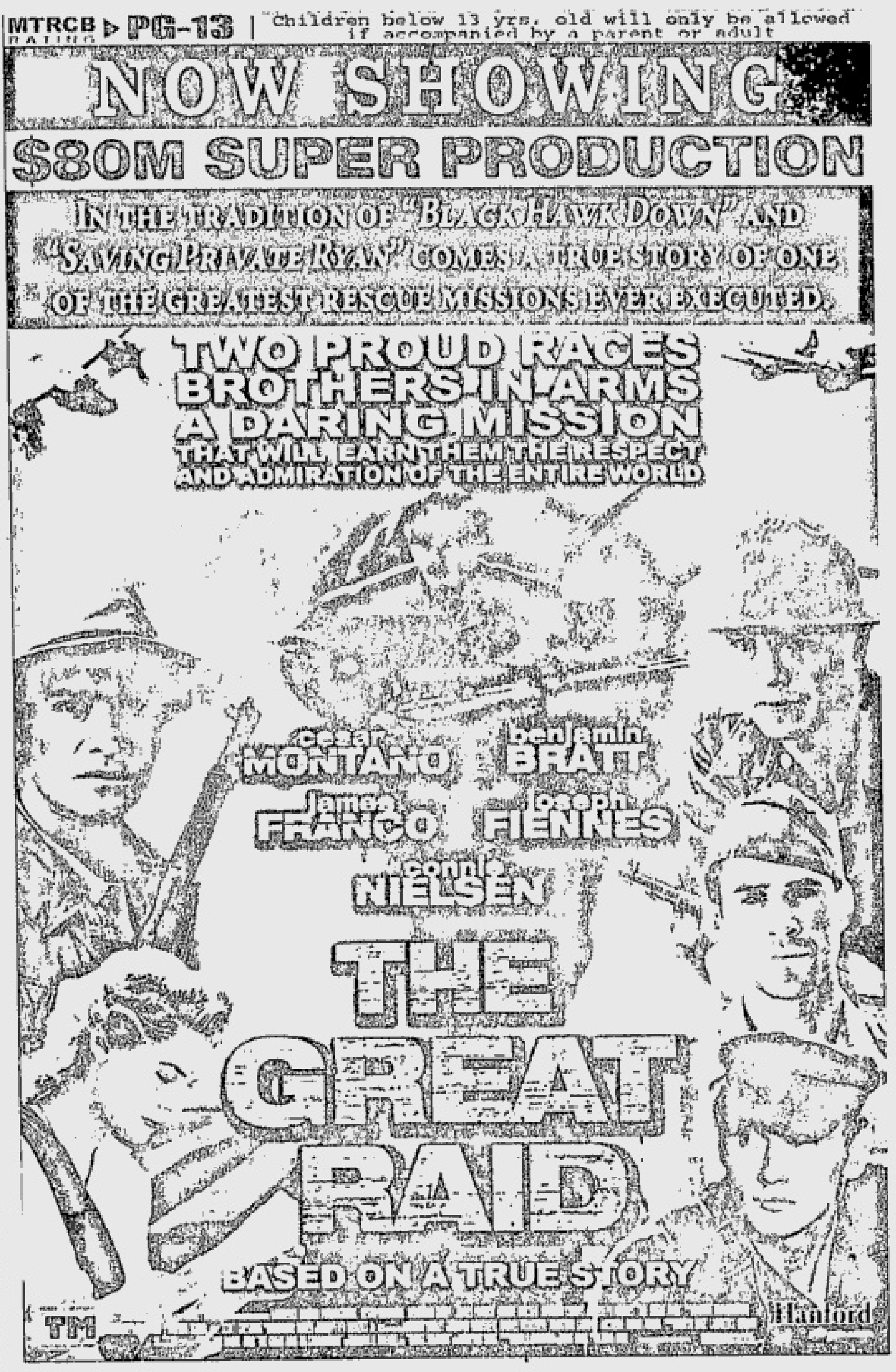
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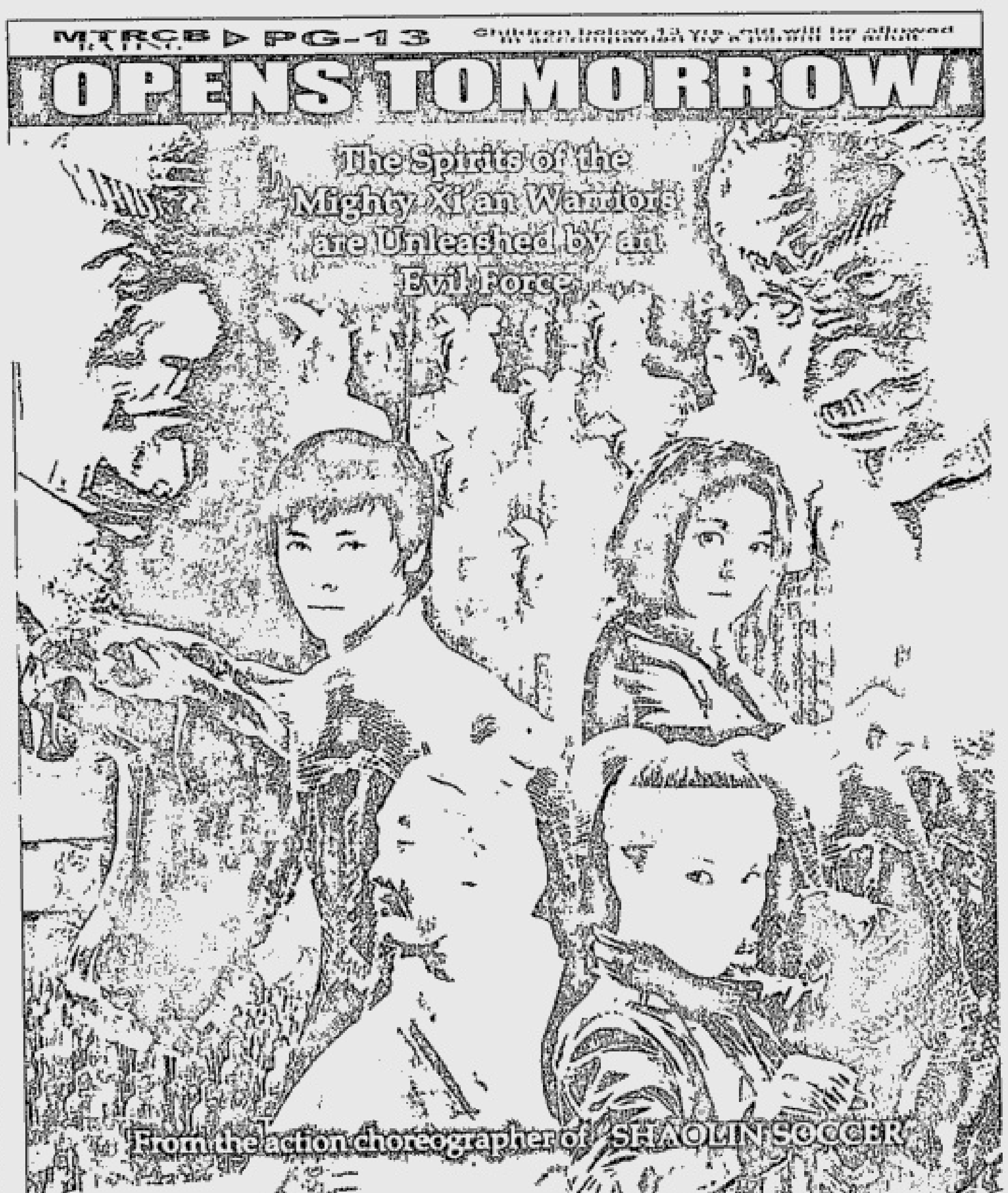
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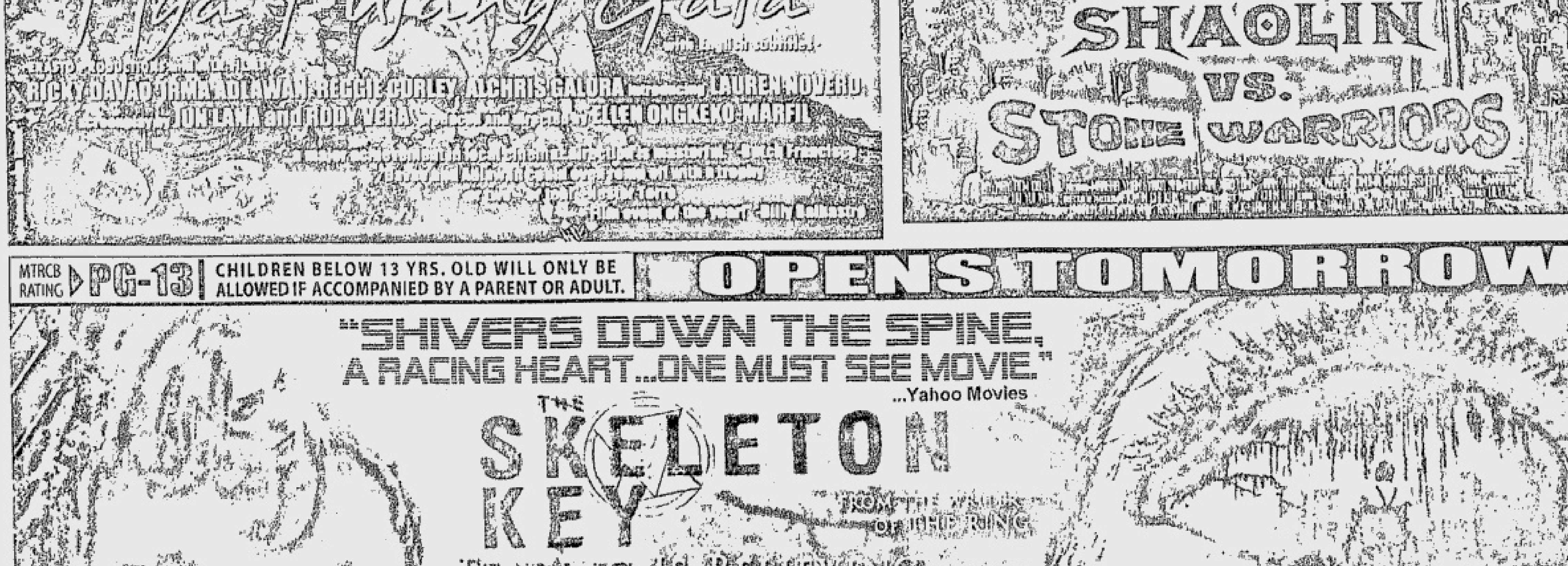
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'Where are my flowers?'

IC: "I enjoy being gay!" RODEL ROTONI

By Marinel R. Cruz

THESE were former child star IC Mendoza's parting words to "StarStruck 2" ultimate survivor Mike Tan after they met and made up on the set of GMA 7's show biz talk show "S-Files" last weekend.

Mike, who admitted that he uttered "arrogant" remarks to IC while they filmed the movie "Lovestruck" recently, personally apologized to the former child star. Mike also kissed IC on the cheek.

IC, 17, is the gay son of TV host and INQUIRER Entertainment columnist Dolly Ann Carvajal and grandson of the late show biz icon Inday Badiday.

IC currently shares hosting chores with Teri Aunor, Alessandra de Rossi and Jeremy Marquez for the "Show Biz Hellouer" segment of S-Files." The kiss-and-make-up with Mike was IC's "first job" on the show.

TAKE FIVE

Can you ever be friends with Mike?

Why not? We may never become super close, but yes, we could be friends.

Did you experience discrimination this before the incident with Mike?

No. I grew up in a community where people respect my sexuality. My classmates—even the guys—at the OB Montessori [Greenhills] ... are my friends.

Did you ever wish you weren't gay?

That crossed my mind, but I never wished for it. *Ang ilusyon ko talaga ay maging babae. Pero masarap maging bakla.*

What should gay people do if people harassed them?

Huwag nilang patulan. They should just prove they are capable of doing things twice as well.

Also, they should be careful not to embarrass themselves in front of guys. When I'm with friends, I behave properly. I'm not wild. *Ayaw ng guys ng gano'n.*

Was it hard to admit to yourself that you were gay?

It was. My relatives' expectations are high. There are only two of us boys in the family—me and my cousin Carl. I'm always being compared with him. He's intelligent, good-looking and very respectful. Ako naman—*maingay,*

WHERE/ A26

ROUNDUP

Congratulations, Jed and Rina!

JED MADELA

BREAKING news: Singer Jed Madela, Philippine representative to the recently concluded 9th World Championships of the Performing Arts in Hollywood, won the gold medal in all six categories that he competed in.

Besting performers from 50 countries, Madela was also awarded a plaque as "Champion of the World."

Another RP bet, Rina Navales, won five golds and one silver in the competition dubbed "Talent Olympics" and joined by "movers and shakers in the entertainment industry in Hollywood and New York" as judges.

Kathleen Dy-Go, Universal Records Philippines producer, said, "We are very proud that we sent two of the country's best performers to that prestigious competition. We are planning great things next year for both Jed and Rina."

'Four Brothers' tops in US

LOS ANGELES—Estimated movie ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations, official box office trackers:

1) "Four Brothers," $20.7M; 2) "The Skeleton Key," $15.8M; 3) "The Dukes of Hazzard," $13M ; 4) "The Wedding Crashers," $12M; 5) "Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo," $9.4M; 6) "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," $7.3M; 7) "March of the Penguins," $6.7M; 8) "Sky High," $6.1M; 9) "Must Love Dogs," $4.6M; 10) "The Great Raid," $3.4M

No books for this Beckham

LONDON—Former Spice Girl singer Victoria Beckham, wife of England football captain David, confessed she has never read a book, a newspaper said Sunday.

Despite struggling for a hit record for some time, Victoria Beckham said she never had a spare moment to leaf through anything more challenging than fashion magazines.

The Sunday Mirror tabloid revealed the shock admission after seeing a forthcoming edition of high society magazine Chic. AFP

'Overwhelmed' in Locarno

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

"I COULDN'T believe it," said Filipino filmmaker Brillante "Dante" Mendoza of winning the Golden Leopard award at the recently concluded 58th Locarno International Film Festival in Switzerland.

Mendoza's debut film, "Masahista," shared the honor in the video division with Canadian Denis Côté's "Le Etats Nordiques."

In the film category, USA's Rodrigo Garcia brought home the top prize for "Nine Lives," topbilled by Oscar favorites Sissy Spacek, Holly Hunter and Glenn Close.

Calling from Locarno, Mendoza told INQUIRER Entertainment that the experience was "overwhelming."

He enthused: "We competed against past Oscar and Cannes winners and the awards night was attended by a huge crowd."

(According to the Locarno website, this year's fest was covered by 1,183 journalists from all over the world representing some 900 newspapers and magazines.)

"Masahista" was in the same category as "Coma" by British filmmaker Mike Figgis who also directed "Leaving Las Vegas," for which Nicolas Cage won the Oscar Best Actor in 1996.

Mendoza's producer Fedelyn Geling of Gee Entertainment was similarly impressed by the turnout.

"On the first two days, we didn't see a single Filipino in Locarno," Geling recalled. "Suddenly, for our two screenings, the Pinoys came out in full force, some coming from Zurich, a three-hour train ride away."

New talents

Geling said there were over 1,200 entries in the video division before the lineup was narrowed down to 25 finalists.

The website notes that the festival is open to "innovative [films] in . . . style and content" and that its mission "is to search for new voices and new talents."

Past winners are luminaries of world cinema like American Jim Jarmusch (Golden Leopard for "Stranger than Paradise" in 1984) and Algerian Tony Gatlif (Silver Leopard for "Gadjo Dilo" in 1997).

The website declared the Locarno fest as "Europe's fourth-ranking international event"—after Cannes, Berlin, and Venice—and said it was "promoted to A category by the International Federation of Film Producers Association in 2002."

MENDOZA, left, and lead star Coco Martin

HBO's 'Deadwood' premieres tonight

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

NEXT in HBO's string of acclaimed original series and specials is "Deadwood," about a town engulfed in lawlessness at the height of America's Gold Rush in the late 1800s. With an assortment of historical and fictional characters, "Deadwood" fuses together actual and fabricated events into intriguing and violent story lines that aren't for the queasy. Viewers are warned of the gritty and adult content.

Rogues, misled hopefuls and greedy individuals give the town its dirt-cake realism. Deadwood is where the opportunistic and naive converge, where their lives are interconnected by the hope for instant fortunes. The first two episodes establish this immediately, despite the sluggish pacing.

We see the competitive conditions through the eyes of a young ex-lawman, Seth Bullock (Timothy Olyphant), who tries his luck with a new business. As expected, he recalls his law-enforcer roots at the first sign of nastiness, and teams up with legendary marksman Wild Bill Hickock (Keith Carradine) in righting wrongs committed in the chaotic neighborhood. But in this version of the Old West, as in the real world, the bad guys are hard to recognize off the bat.

A unique and complicated villain, Al Swearengen, comes to life through the spirited portrayal of regular cast member Ian McShane, who won a Golden Globe for the role. Al the bartender and brothel owner is the devil personified—a silver-tongued and charismatic figure, but also a double-crossing and brutal businessman.

"Deadwood" is obviously neither feelgood nor escapist in the traditional sense (HBO seems to be specializing in bleak and edgy dramas lately), but it creatively presents a world that's nonetheless made authentic and engaging by inspired performances, consistently scathing dialogue, and impressive production artistry.

The series debuts over HBO Asia at 10:15 tonight. Every new episode will air every Tuesday thereafter at 10 p.m., with replays every Saturday night (times vary) and Tuesdays at 9 p.m.

ONE of the few quiet scenes in the story of a lawless town during America's Gold Rush

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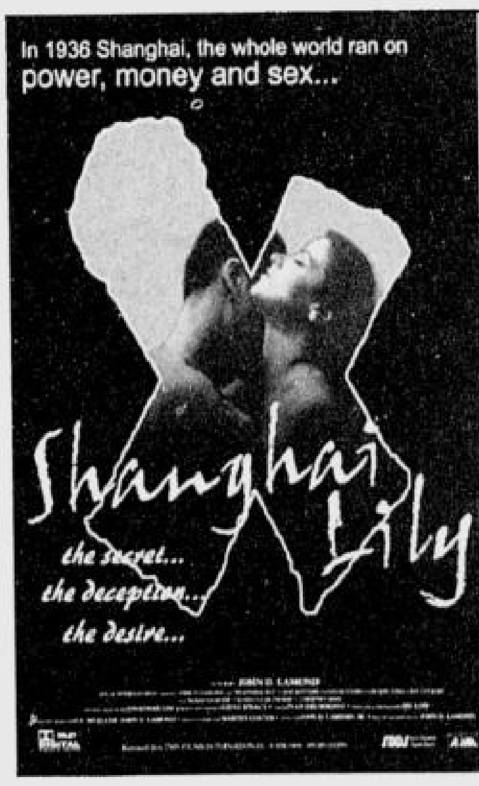

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Peso weakens on oil, VAT concerns

Sheds 12.5 centavos to close at 55.77 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

AFTER posting strong gains last week, the peso weakened against the US dollar yesterday as runaway global oil prices spooked market sentiment, currency dealers said.

The local currency closed at 55.77, shedding 12.5 centavos from Friday's 55.645 at the Philippine Dealing System. Aside from jitters over skyrocketing oil prices, traders said the peso succumbed to profit-taking as well as significant commercial demand.

But as corporate demand thinned out later during the day, the peso recovered some of the losses that initially weighed it down to an intra-day low of 55.86 against the greenback.

"The day's close at 55.77 is viewed as a technical rebound," said Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist at Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

Traders said the local currency was boosted in afternoon trade by the strong regional markets, particularly the rise of the yen against the dollar.

"The market is also looking at the possibility that the value-added tax (VAT) may be deferred and that's a negative," said one trader with a big commercial bank.

However, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves gave an assurance yesterday that the government remained committed to the implementation of the VAT law upon the lifting of a temporary restraint order by the Supreme Court. *(See story on page A1.)*

Oil prices have reached record levels and are seen to surge further in the near term.

The global economics unit of American Express Bank, however, expected a downtrend in the last quarter of this year.

"Over the past few days it has been Iran worries and US refinery shutdowns that have squeezed the oil price higher," Amex said in a recent commentary. But Amex said the actual supply of crude was high and inventories were also strong and that a weaker Chinese economy later this year should also slow oil demand growth.

The bank said oil prices would at some point fall back to the marginal cost of production—the high $30's per barrel—probably starting in the fourth quarter.

The stock market also succumbed to profit-taking on surging oil prices and the possibility of a further delay in the VAT implementation.

Share prices closed 1.58 percent lower yesterday with investors booking profits and snapping a four-day rally which took the market to a two month high, dealers said.

They said investors also expressed concern that the government would defer the collection of the new value-added tax (VAT) law, should the Supreme Court lift its 46-day-old freeze order on the statute.

The composite index shed 32.11 points to 2,005.99. It traded between 2,002.94 and 2,039.14. Turnover reached 454.27 million shares worth P1.06 billion.

The broader all-shares index fell 15.34 points to 1,214.98. Losers beat gainers 53 to 30, while 38 stocks ended unchanged. The peso traded at an average of 55.78 to the dollar by midday.

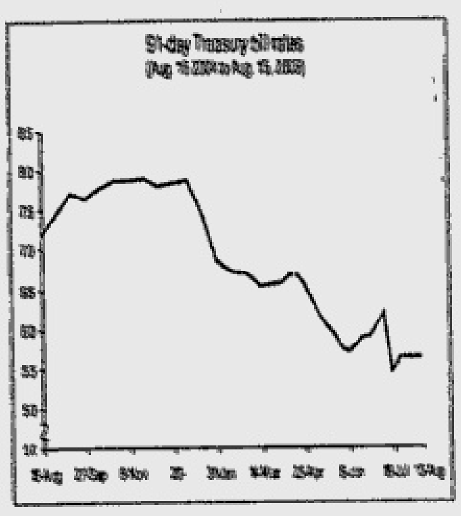
Investors took the VAT issue as an excuse to take profits after the market's rise by more than 3 percent over four trading days last week, dealers said.

House of Representatives member Joey Salceda said he had advised President Gloria Arroyo to defer the VAT collection on petroleum until crude oil prices went back to the $50 levels from their all-time highs of more than $60 a barrel.

Dealers said share prices are likely to recover in the coming sessions after falling to a psychological support at 2,000. **AFP**

Fresh fiscal woes halt T-bill rate slide

By Michelle V. Remo



THE HIGH level of liquidity in the market was offset by renewed concerns on the fiscal front, forcing treasury bill rates to move sideways yesterday.

The bellwether 91-day bills fetched an average rate of 5.622 percent, unchanged from the previous week. "This is unusual," commented Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan, considering that banks remained awash with cash.

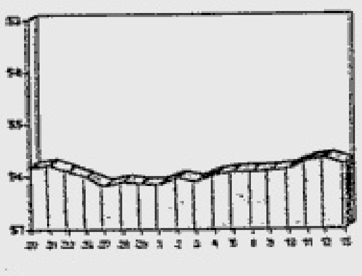
The 182- and 364-day bills fetched 7.44 percent and 8.476 percent, respectively, hardly moving from last week's levels.

"The market is very liquid, but at the same time banks are apprehensive of giving out strong bids because of several concerns," said a treasury official from a leading commercial bank.

The official cited threats of further acceleration in inflation due to the surge in oil prices to new highs, and the uncertainty of the implementation of the expanded value-added tax law.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 55.770= $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Aug. 15, 2005

¥ 109.54= $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Aug. 15, 2005

GOLD: $442.80-443.30
per ounce Hong Kong, Aug. 15, 2005

WHAT'S INSIDE

Reynolds assets still for sale /B2

An impotent announcement /B3

Court urged to release coco levy assets /B4

Call-center boom lifts property sector

But political crisis may reverse uptrend

By Daxim L. Lucas

SPECIAL REPORT

AMANDA'S work has absolutely nothing to do with her college degree, she claims.

Yet she persists at it because "it pays good money" and allows her to buy "stuff" she had always wanted, like clothes in fashion or a late model cellular phone, and go to "gimmicks" once—sometimes twice—a week.

Amanda is just one of the thousands of fresh graduates who now work for call centers and business process outsourcing (BPO) firms that have set up shop to exploit the country's cheap, English-speaking workforce.

"I don't get to apply anything I learned in my tourism course," she says, while munching on a burger at a fastfood outlet during her "lunch break"—which in this case is midnight. "But I think I'm lucky that I have a job, especially with the situation in our country now."

She probably doesn't know it, but the industry she works for is generating not only thousands of new jobs each year, but also injecting new life into the country's long dormant property sector.

THE EMERGENCE of the Philippines as an outsourcing destination has boosted the demand for office space.
PDI PHOTO

Uneven recovery

Eight years after the outbreak of the East Asian financial crisis, the local property market is on the move once more.

In recent months, property prices across most segments of the industry have been rising at a pace not seen since the mid-1990s. Some economists and market analysts now believe that this trend may signal a gradual return of the long-awaited property boom.

Nowhere is the property recovery more evident than in the demand for office space in the Makati and Ortigas central business districts, driven by the boom in call centers and BPOs.

In these areas, rent and capital values for

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mazda

Reynolds assets still for sale

By Doris C. Dumlao

CREDITORS of Reynolds Philippines Corp. said they would soon launch another attempt to sell about P365 million worth of company assets after failing to attract buyers in a bidding held recently.

The assets to be sold include Reynolds' plant and equipment, excluding real property in Dasmariñas, Cavite where the manufacturing operations are located, said Omar Salvo, first vice president of creditor Land Bank of the Philippines.

Reynolds' plant and real property are now jointly owned by creditor-banks LandBank, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., RCBC Savings Bank and Asiatrust Development Bank.

Salvo said the consortium of creditors would deal with the Dasmariñas property separately, noting that the area was now booming especially since a new SM mall has opened nearby.

The bidding for Reynolds' plant and equipment was held last July 28. While there were a number of groups that had expressed interest in buying the assets, only one submitted an offer, which did not even comply with the requirements set by the creditors.

Salvo said the the four banks were now exploring their alternatives on how to dispose of the assets.

"We're studying whether we will just adjust the parameters and then go through another bidding or set up the terms and open it to negotiated process," Salvo said.

One reason why the bidding might have failed, Salvo, noted, was because of pricing issues.

"Since the time that we set the price, the world market prices for metal has gone down," he said.

Another provision that may be revisited, he said, was the requirement that the equipment must be pulled out by the winning bidder within six months.

"Given that scrap metal prices are coming down, some parties are looking at scrapping everything and then using the equipment. For some of the prospective buyers, six months might not be enough," Salvo said.

He said the banks would finalize the terms of disposition within the next few days.

"What's important is to have an orderly process. If you have a negotiated sale wherein each one will propose his own terms, it will be difficult to handle and we might end up with 60 proposals," Salvo said.

The creditor-banks will share the proceeds of the sale.

RPC was established in 1954 by Reynolds International Inc. of the United States. It was into the manufacturing and distribution of aluminum sheets, foil and extruded sections used in the packaging, container, construction, appliance manufacturing and vehicle manufacturing industries.

Energy conversation

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

EVEN a giant like San Miguel Corp., based on its latest report to the stock exchange, is suffering from the increase in the prices of just about everything.

Given the sorry state of governance in our country today, plus the past 19 years, I can only say, therefore, heaven help all of us down here.

As everybody knows, the costly imported oil is pushing up the price of just about everything here, including perhaps, graft and corruption.

With the timely "let-us-change-the-media-topic" tactic of the Palace, even the dead in the cemetery knows that oil prices have gone somewhere up there near Mars.

Fortunately for us down here, this cute administration already did something about the problem. The Palace already gave us a lot of ... well, "warning."

There, just like that, the problem is solved. It's as if we do not already know, since we are only the ones bearing the pain of it all, ma'am!

***

TALK is cheap, as they say, and cheap is the way of this talkative cute administration of Gloriaetta. Look, did she really have to make that phone call to Garci?

We already know the problem about the stiff price of imported oil, boss, and we are actually looking up to our leaders for a little plan on how to fight it.

And "conservation" was all we could get from the Palace. Brilliant! Now, why did I not think of that? If something is expensive, just don't use it. Perfect!

Okay, for this country to save on oil bills, from now on, nobody goes to all those air-conditioned malls, each of which is the size of the entire Batanes.

In other words, it's the tired, old "tighten your belts" again. Never mind that we no longer have belts.

Well, the biggest food and beverage conglomerate in this entire region—San Miguel is feeling the pinch. That should tell us something about the problem.

And that is, mere "conservation" just won't do anymore.

***

TAKING the case of San Miguel, we notice that the company actually sold a lot more goods during the first half of the year. Its revenues were 24 percent higher.

Yet, the company suffered a slight drop in its profits of about 4 percent. Its statement to the stock exchange pointed to rising costs as the culprit.

There—San Miguel did its job well, and it sold more goods, which in any business should normally mean it should have made more money. Normally.

But then that did not happen, because San Miguel actually spent more to make and distribute those same goods. It is the same story for all of us down here.

And so, if a giant like San Miguel is hit by rising costs, not to mention the inhospitable business environment from politics, what can we do down here?

The Palace said that we just save on energy. Okay, I already stopped using fuel to cook my food, and I eat everything raw. What do I do now, boss?

***

AND to think, San Miguel did not even give an inch to competition. It did not lose market share, which could have eaten into its profitability.

In fact, the company remained the dominant player in all its product lines, particularly beer, meat products and soft drinks.

Of course, some stock market analysts argued that the company could withstand the oil shock better than most businesses here, because of its aggressive expansion overseas.

In the past seven years, the company did a lot of reengineering under the tandem of its chair and CEO, Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., and its vice chair and president, Ramon Ang, and today, it is an entirely different San Miguel from it was in 1998.

During those seven years, the company grew the fastest ever, and it made the most money ever.

In effect, the stock market analysts are saying that the company's success must have something to do with management.

It has to be good, at least, if not brilliant. I just don't know if the analysts were hinting something about this cute administration's style of managing the economy.

***

OF PARTICULAR interest to me, personally, is the management style of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Michael Defensor.

When Defensor talks, the guys down here in my barangay really listen. They want to know the truth, and it is the exact opposite of what Defensor is saying.

Only last week, the ever-glib Defensor did something for his besieged boss, Gloriaetta, which no other person in the opposition could have done.

And that is, Defensor single-handedly resurrected public interest, with the help of media, in the waning issue of the "Hello Garci" tapes.

Defensor claimed on national television that a technical report, imported all the way from Texas in the United States, showed that the "Hello Garci" tapes were fake.

As expected, proving once again that the guys in my barangay had the right idea, the technical guy in Texas denied a lot of the things that Defensor claimed.

I don't know if this development did something to the credibility of this cute administration. But at least it proved to us that Defensor is doing everything he can to protect the environment.

For one, his claims on the technical analysis of the "Hello Garci" tapes merely added to the noise pollution.

***

ANYWAY, Defensor must have made a worthwhile investment in the imported technical analysis of the "Hello Garci" tapes, by rekindling the issue.

As everybody knows, except perhaps the "jueteng" witnesses who already asked for forgiveness, politics is not helping the business community.

A lot of investments are on hold, except perhaps mall construction, which is not exactly good for the energy picture, either.

And business is saying that, more than just the call for energy conservation, we need more investments for the economy to continue growing, which is the only way we can overcome this energy crisis.

If business sees that some important investments are being made, every company will think of making its own investments.

It could be part of the so-called herd mentality. In business, everybody does one thing at the same time, such as investing.

But it has factual basis. If some big investments take place, it means more jobs, which in turn means buying power, which means everybody else has a better chance of selling more of his goods.

It's a chain reaction. And it is an offensive move, rather than a defensive one.

***

TO USE the example of San Miguel, in the past years the company has been busy expanding overseas, precisely to tap other markets.

For instance, it acquired Boggs beer in Australia, and in the stock market, they know that it was a sure-fire way for San Miguel's brands of beer to penetrate the Australian market.

It bought other companies, like the juice maker Berri and the dairy firm, National Foods. Both companies are well entrenched in Asia. They already have a distribution system, for instance, which is not exactly bad for San Miguel.

Of course, San Miguel did other things than just expand overseas. It sold its minority holdings here, it changed its distribution structure, it trimmed the fat off its international operations, particularly those in Hong Kong.

Still, it is clear that the company's expansion overseas can have a telling effect on its profitability. If it can make money elsewhere, maybe in its domestic operations, the company will not have to suffer that much during bad times here.

Its income overseas can offset any problem in its income here. In a way, it becomes politics-proof.

***

IF THIS cute administration wants me to chew on my fingernails over the price of oil, it is succeeding. I have never been as frightened as I am today over any oil crisis, past or present or future.

I'm old enough to remember the first oil crisis more than 25 years ago, in the late 70s and early 80s.

By the way, 1981 saw the height of that crisis. The price of oil in 1981 hit the equivalent of $75 per barrel at today's prices.

We are close to the peak. The price of oil in the world markets is now going at $67 per barrel. It will not stop rising, for sure.

That crisis helped a lot in bringing down the Marcos dictatorship, which resorted to short-term loans to pay for trade deficits caused by the oil crisis.

Those loans exploded soon enough by 1983, forcing the regime to declare a debt moratorium, which led to our economic collapse, and eventually to the regime's downfall.

And they say history always has a way of repeating itself.

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of August 15, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4	4	4	4	32,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	33	33.5	33	33	616,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	52	52	51.5	51.5	4,784,900
China Banking Corp.	765	780	765	780	52,360
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.66	0.68	0.64	0.68	7,460,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	52	52	52	52	30,400
International Exch. Bank	19	19	19	19	10,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28	28	27.5	28	439,500
Philippine National Bank	46	46	39	40.5	423,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	15.25	14	15.25	47,200
Security Bank Corp.	33.5	33.5	32	33	99,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	32	32	31	31	44,500
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	10,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	260	260	260	260	90
Manulife Financial Corp.	2790	2790	2790	2790	1,160
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	141	141	141	141	120
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2005	2005	2005	2005	310
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14	14	13.5	13.5	38,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.06	2,462,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	815	815	810	810	5,380
Ipeople Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	30,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	1,000,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	300,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	20,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.15	4,292,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1695	1695	1640	1640	85,240
Philweb Corp.	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.017	21,500,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.25	15.25	15	15.25	37,200
Manila Electric Co. B	25	25	24.75	25	323,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.6	695,000
Petron Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.25	3.25	1,700,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	750,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.7	1.74	1.7	1.7	515,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	19,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	95,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	100,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3	3.25	3	3.25	879,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.6	3.55	3.6	210,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	5,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	32	32	32	32	10,700
Swift Food Inc.	0.23	0.26	0.23	0.26	110,000
San Miguel Corp. A	68	69	68	69	394,100
San Miguel Corp. B	100	100	99.5	100	328,540
Universal Robina Corp.	17	17.25	17	17.25	42,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.3	0.26	0.3	5,600,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	320	322.5	312.5	315	84,190
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.57	0.57	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5	5	4.95	4.95	25,335,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	3,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	309,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	23,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	400,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	150,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	10,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	25,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	650,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.14	1.16	3,835,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.2	0.21	0.19	0.21	1,060,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.245	0.28	0.245	0.28	15,780,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.05	900,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	200,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.7	2,709,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45.5	45.5	44.5	45.5	745,300
Global Equities Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	700,000
House Of Investments Inc.	0.94	1	0.94	1	390,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.35	3.4	1,410,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	160,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.42	1.44	1,096,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	19,710,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.245	0.24	0.24	860,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	200,000
SM Investments Corp.	228	229	225	227	497,190
South China Resources Inc.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.71	130,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.14	0.145	0.14	0.14	560,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1,720,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	1,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	1,250,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	400,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.98	970,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.4	1.42	1,070,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	200,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	14	14	13.75	14	92,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series AA	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	6,200
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	11,000
Far Eastern University	600	600	600	600	170
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	8.5	8.5	8.2	8.2	1,635,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.54	1.6	1.54	1.6	303,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.245	0.25	0.245	0.25	500,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.28	11,480,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.37	920,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.58	1.6	1.54	1.6	12,259,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	440,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	140,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.2	0.2	0.195	0.195	400,000
SM Development Corp.	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.54	34,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.5	7.5	7.3	7.4	4,489,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.9	0.95	0.9	0.95	140,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	35,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5	5	5	5	28,000
Benguet Corp. A	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	10,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	17,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	750,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	5,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	800,000
Omico Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	106,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	140,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.93	180,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	29	29	28	28	1,399,400
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	97,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	8,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	190,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	60,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.5	3.55	224,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	460,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	60,000

CURRENCIES

August 15, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.803858521	1.000000	55.6590
Japan	Yen	0.007348	0.009141	0.5088
United Kingdom	Pound	1.458762	1.814700	101.0044
Hongkong	Dollar	0.103469	0.128715	7.1641
Switzerland	Franc	0.644324	0.801539	44.6129
Canada	Dollar	0.671617	0.835492	46.5026
Singapore	Dollar	0.486509	0.605217	33.6858
Australia	Dollar	0.620636	0.772320	42.9866
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.132307	2.652590	147.6405
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.214357	0.266660	14.8420
Brunei	Dollar	0.485041	0.603391	33.5841
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000102	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.019676	0.024477	1.3624
UAE	Dirham	0.218874	0.272279	15.1548
Euro	Euro	1	1.244000	69.2398
ArgentinaPeso	0.278875	0.346921	19.3093	
Brazil	REAL	0.33726	0.419551	23.3518
Denmark	Kroner	0.134041	0.166747	9.2810
India	Rupee	0.018488	0.022999	1.2801
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214363	0.266667	14.8424
Mexico	New Peso	0.075558	0.093994	5.2316
New Zealand	Dollar	0.568741	0.707514	39.3795
South Africa	Rand	0.126792	0.157729	8.7790
Korea	Won	0.000793	0.000986	0.0549
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025242	0.031401	1.7477

Megaworld profit up 30%

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE BRISK sales of its real estate units in the fast-growing Eastwood City in Quezon City pushed up the net income of property developer Megaworld Corp. in the first six months.

In its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Megaworld said its consolidated net income grew 30 percent to P518.87 million from last year's P398.87 million.

Consolidated revenue jumped 36 percent to P2.59 billion, from P1.90 billion in the same period last year.

Among its product groupings, P1.81 billion or 70 percent of total revenue came from the sale of residential units. The group's real estate sales came from Eastwood City projects, Grand Eastwood Palazzo, Eastwood Excelsior, One Orchard Road and Eastwood Cyber One; Forbeswood Heights in Fort Bonifacio and Paseo Parkview, Greenbelt Radissons and Greenbelt Parkplace in Makati City. The remaining 30 percent of consolidated revenue or P773.04 million came from rental and hotel operations, interest and other income.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

An impotent announcement

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

ACCORDING to an article in the INQUIRER on Saturday, by 2020, 285 million men aged 40 and above will be impotent. The reasons given are diabetes and obesity, caused by too much fast food, smoking, drinking, job stress and lack of exercise. In Western and Eastern countries, 20 percent of all men admit that they are impotent.

In the Philippines, the rate is lower as there are so many unemployed (no job stress) and we have the highest population growth of any country outside Africa. Rabbits come regularly to the Philippines to study the mating habits of Filipinos. At 75, I remain in fine shape because of my no-meat, no-fat diet plus no drinking, smoking, and daily exercise feeding my goldfish. Admittedly, my wife sprinkles Viagra on my cereal every morning. She says that during lovemaking, men should sigh contently. She says that sighs is important.

Last week, space constraint caused me to omit APOLLO for which I Apollogize. I also forgot to mention the most important Norse god, THOR. He had the ability to assume any shape and he came to earth as a handsome man in order to seduce a beautiful maiden. Afterwards, he thumped his chest and proudly announced, " I'm THOR." "Yeth," said the girl. "Tho am I."

A reader sent me the following story:

My girlfriend and I had been dating for over a year and decided to get married. My girlfriend was a dream but there was one thing that was bothering me. Her gorgeous sister was 20 and wore tight mini skirts and low-cut blouses. She would regularly bend down near me, giving me a spectacular view of her cleavage.

One day her little sister called me to check the wedding invitations. She was alone when I arrived. She said that she had feelings and desires for me that she could not overcome. She said she wanted to make love to me just once before I got married and committed for life.

I was in total shock and could not say a word. She said; "I'm going upstairs to my bedroom and if you want me, just come and get me." I was stunned, I was frozen in shock as I watched her go up the stairs. When she got to the top, she removed her panties and threw them down the stairs at me.

I stood there for a moment, then turned and went straight to the front door. I opened the door, stepped out of the house and walked straight toward my car. My future father-in-law was standing outside. With tears in his eyes, he hugged me and said, "We are very happy that you passed our little test. We could not ask for a better man for our daughter. Welcome to the family."

The moral of this story is, always keep your condoms in your car.

* * *

I have good news for readers who bought FH. The SEC has approved the rights issue of 1 for 2 at P1. The record date will be announced shortly and the new shares should be available early in September. If you already hold shares or are thinking of buying them, MAKE SURE THAT YOU TAKE UP THE RIGHTS. To make certain, instruct your brokers to do so and put into your account sufficient money to pay for the new shares.

The current price is P7.70 and the new shares are being offered at P1 so if you do not take them up, you will be throwing money away and diluting your holding in the company. If possible, hold the shares for the long term as all call centers are doing extremely well. At the beginning of the year, there were 40,000 seats; by the end of 2005, there are expected to be at least 70,000. The number of seats is anticipated to reach 200,000 by 2010 so this is a sunrise industry in which you should be invested. At present, FH is the only stock listed.

There have been good results from ALI, BPI and MWC so AC reported a 49 percent rise in profits in the first half of 2005. Only GLOBE was disappointing with its 69 percent drop in 2nd quarter profits. I prefer ALI to AC over the long term but I am not recommending a BUY now as I think we may are for a correction. We failed to break 2050 last Friday, the degree of risk hit 100 on Wednesday and there is a tendency for the market to drift lower after the dividend season comes to a close. So you should be out of the market for the time being.

For the long term, I also like MEG, who builds condominiums for call centers, which are crying out for office space. They are also building a hotel to be run by the Marriott Group. Other stocks that I like long term include ICT, which just produced excellent results and has first-class management. It has just acquired the rights to operate the port in the island of Madagas-

MR BEARBULL/ B4

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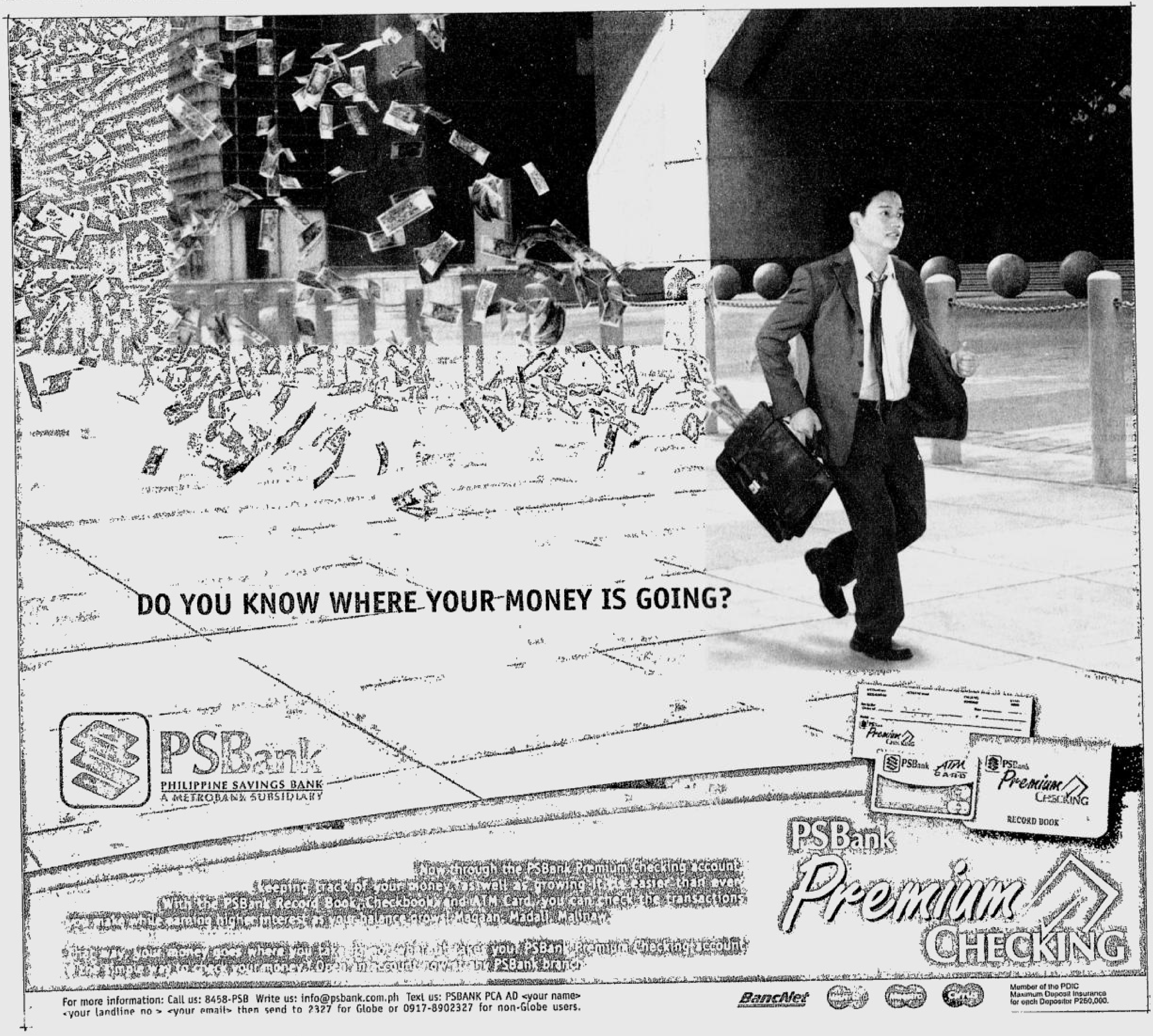

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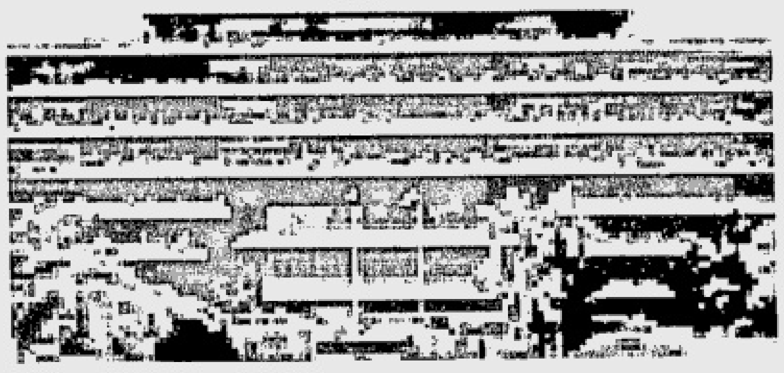
Sandiganbayan urged to release coco levy assets

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE OFFICE of the Solicitor General has urged the Sandiganbayan to immediately release the coco-levy funded assets in San Miguel Corp., the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) and the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) Group.

In separate motions for execution submitted to the Sandiganbayan last Aug. 9, Associate Solicitor General Wilson C. Vinoya and Assistant Solicitor General Amparo Cabotaje-Tang had asked the Supreme Court to implement its decision regarding "the true ownership and transfer of some significant number of shares of stocks in UCPB, CIIF Group and SMC to its rightful owners-the peasant coconut farmers-should once and for all be executed immediately."

This would mean that some 72.2 million shares in UCPB, the 27 percent in SMC, and the majority ownership in CIIF, would be transferred to the Philippine government, as provided under the Supreme Court decision of July 11, 2003.



SAN Miguel Corp. headquarters

"This move from the OSG will hasten the court proceedings because in 15 days, the Sandiganbayan could rule in favor of the Philippine government and the small coconut farmers," explained Coconut Industry Reform Movement Inc. executive director Jose Ma. Faustino.

Faustino said the dividend earnings from the shares of stocks could be invested in a trust fund for the sole use of the peasant coconut farmers for the development of the Philippine coconut sector.

"As of now, only P1 billion could be tapped from the dividend earnings from SMC. However, the immediate action of the high court could mean at least P5 billion yearly could be utilized by the 3.5 million peasant coconut farmers," Faustino said.

Considering the political and economic conditions in the country, the proper use of the questioned UCPB shares derived from the coconut levy funds could be the only hope to genuinely address the problems of the coconut industry, said the Motion for Execution filed by Cabotaje-Tang and Vinoya.

"It is only through the execution of the Honorable Court's Summary Judgment promulgated on July 11, 2003, that justice would truly be served," the court motion said.

According to the July 11, 2003 judgment of the Supreme Court, "the UCPB shares of stock of the alleged fronts, nominees and dummies of defendant Eduardo M. Cojuangco Jr., which is part of the 72 percent shares of the formerly First United Bank and now the UCPB paid for by the Philippine Coconut Authority with public funds later charged to the coconut levy funds, belong to the plaintiff Republic of the Philippines as their true and beneficial owner."

The Supreme Court said the shares of stocks in these companies were purchased through the coco levies collected from peasant coconut farmers since the 1970s and were not bought by Cojuangco.

Flying V pioneers sale of coco-biodiesel

BAGUIO CITY—Petroleum product distributor Flying V made a leap of faith here with the inauguration last week of the first station to sell diesel pre-blended with one percent coco methyl ester (CME).

Aldrin Magpantay, technical engineer of CME distributor Chemrez Inc., said the one percent CME mixture can increase mileage by 5-30 percent.

It can also bring down smoke exhaust by as much as 60 percent.

"Honestly, we are not really thinking of profit when we started this. We just wanted to pioneer the development of environment-friendly petroleum products," said Jing Raymundo, business associate of Flying V.

Flying V is using the Envirotek Premium Biodiesel in its product.

Because a 20-percent blend is needed by first-time CME users to clean their engines, the Flying V station is also selling bottled Envirotek Bio-Activ BD 100+ in liter or drum packages.

Raymundo said the mix was 60 centavos more expensive than regular diesel, but business was active despite the remote location of the station along Ambuklao road.

Last week, the station sold about 2,500 liters of the pre-blend fuel.

Most of the customers were jeepney drivers supporting the city's Bantay Kalinisan Program and the Philippine Clean Cities Program (PCCP).

The station's opening coincided with the launch of the Bantay Kalinisan, a program aimed at cleaning up Baguio's air.

A 2002 World Bank report on the environment showed that Baguio has one of the highest concentrations of PM10, or particles smaller than 10 microns, among the Philippines' cities.

PM10 are considered dangerous because they can enter the inner parts of the lungs, causing respiratory illnesses.

One of the demands of the PCCP executive committee to bring down air pollution was the pre-blending of CME in diesel, said Magpantay.

Before that, CME distributors like Chemrez, Sanbel and Flying V, offered the product directly to jeepney drivers.

The drivers, in turn, would add the mixture to their diesel.

Raymundo said that if the program succeeds in Baguio, Flying V would distribute the product in its more than 100 stations in the country, beginning with other PCCP members.

These include the cities of Davao, Cebu and Makati.

Paul Tanjutco, Flying V chief operating officer, said the company would soon put up stations selling pre-blend diesel in major villages in Baguio. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Mr. Bearbull

From page B3

car. It has done very well in Brazil and Poland. I also like AEV, which also announced very good results with all units contributing. AEV has interests in shipping, banking and power stations.

The bid for PNB was very disappointing with 10 bidders ending up as 2, if you include Lucio Tan. Union Bank bid only P43.77, barely over the minimum of P43. Lucio Tan has 15 days in which to match the bid and does not need to increase it. The price has fallen to P40.

Our Research Department has sent out a SELL signal in San Miguel. Although sales rose from P81 billion to P100 billion, profits were 10 percent below analysts' expectations due to higher financing costs. They feel that SMC is paying too much for its acquisitions abroad. SM obviously feels differently as they have just bought 143 million SMC at P63. We shall have to wait and see who will be right but on a price/earnings ratio of 37 the shares of SMCB look expensive.

The stock market has been rising partly because the whole of Asia, Europe and the US has been hitting new highs. This is largely because the US economy is continuing to grow and 205,000 jobs were created in July, better than anticipated. The Federal Reserve raised rates for the tenth time to 3.5 percent and will continue to do so. Hourly earnings last month rose 0.4 percent. This might just be a blip but annualized, it is equivalent to an inflation rate of 4.8 percent. The FED wants to keep inflation at or below 2 percent so further increases are inevitable. A strong US is good for Asia, as it is a major importer. The slight revaluation of the yuan also helped improve sentiment.

Another reason for the rise in the PHISIX is that the Supreme Court asked Congress for a copy of the sales regarding the VAT bill. This was immediately interpreted as suggesting that the TRO would be reversed. This does not follow. Obviously, the Supreme Court has to study the rules in great detail before coming to a decision. So this should not be taken as an indication as to which way they will vote later this month.

There is speculation that GMA might try to delay the VAT bill assuming that it is approved. I think this most unlikely. She promised the new team that she would not interfere in any way. If she does, I am sure that Finance Secretary TEVES and his entire team will resign, plunging the country into chaos.

Call-center boom lifts property sector

From page B1

office space bottomed out in late 2003, having dropped by as much as 60 percent since the property bubble burst.

Prices have been rising steadily since.

In the second quarter alone, rent prices have risen by an average of 9 percent from the previous quarter due to the booming demand for office space and limited supply, according to property consultancy firm Jones Lang LaSalle.

"The emergence of the Philippines as an outsourcing destination has boosted the demand for office space," the firm observes. "This demand is mainly driven by the entry and expansion of call centers and BPO companies."

As a result, the vacancy rate in prime office buildings has declined to only 5.9 percent in the second quarter of the year. In its latest research bulletin, Jones Lang LaSalle estimates that the vacancy rate will drop further to 5.6 percent—a level unseen since the start of the 1990s building boom—by the end of 2005.

The reason for this is the classic confluence of growing demand amid very limited supply.

"With no traditional office buildings completed in the past two years, tight supply, coupled with strong demand, continue to push rents and vacancy rates to pre-Asian financial crisis levels," the firm says.

So much so that first-class buildings like The Enterprise Center along Ayala Ave. have reportedly cut down their "free rent" offers to new tenants to only two months' worth from as high as nine months only a year ago.

Limited supply

Burned by overinvestment in the 1990s, local property developers have turned gun-shy, choosing to exhaust local supply and wait for lower land values before breaking ground on new office buildings.

At present, there are 8.8 million square feet of office space available in Makati and 3.6 million square feet in the Ortigas area. Given the rate that call centers are cropping up, supply is running out fast.

No new office buildings were launched in the last two years, and none are being planned for at least three more years, according to Colliers International Philippines research head Richard Raymundo.

He said most landowners are still quoting high prices as if the 1997 crisis has never happened at all.

"It's still not realistic," he says. "How can you develop the property if you don't have the land?"

On the other hand, other developers are also hesitant about putting up new buildings because rent and capital values have not appreciated beyond their threshold yet.

"Construction costs are definitely higher than 1996 levels, so you'd have to hit a certain rent price level for you to be able to say 'Hey, I'll go ahead with the project'," he adds.

For developers to start thinking about putting up new buildings, rental prices should appreciate to P650-P700 a square meter a month—a level which will likely be hit in the next six months.

So what's holding the market back?

This early, cracks are already starting to emerge in the property sector's nascent recovery. Apart from what looks like a slowly inflating property market bubble, analysts at Colliers feel that the country's "slow burn" political crisis is gradually taking its toll on the local business scene.

Political crisis

"If you look at the forecasts [for price appreciation], it's steep, but we might downgrade that," he warns. "We're already seeing signs that it might slowdown in the next six months because of all this political instability."

He explains that office space for call centers and BPOs are major investments that are made in the context of the local politico-economic environment and not only on the basis of cheap labor.

"At the end of the day, it's investor confidence that matters," he says. "If you're looking at a 5,000-square-meter office space, that's a lot of money. If you see that something's unstable, you tend to defer your decision."

To be sure, other segments of the property market are also making good business especially residential developments, which are being targeted at overseas Filipino workers and other expatriate Filipinos with large disposable incomes.

"The only sector that's being left out is the market for golf shares which hasn't recovered since the Asian crisis," Raymundo says. "All the other sectors are seeing rising prices."

Already, Colliers believes that the demand for residential property developments will plateau in the next two to three years.

While Jones Lang LaSalle predicted over the summer that sales of mid-income residential developments will "remain buoyant" due to "competitive pricing coupled with low interest rates," this situation may soon change due to developments on the political front.

Indeed, the crisis is already threatening the normally resilient residential sector, as short- and long-term interest rates rise to help the government borrow funds and fend off speculative attacks against the local currency.

No market crash

Nonetheless, a 1997-style market crash is unlikely given the continued lack of supply on almost all segments.

"There is no overinvestment, so there is no bubble to burst," Unicapital Inc. research head Enrico Claudio says in an interview. He says he is bullish on the property market, especially since its upward cycle has just started.

The main threat he sees over the horizon is if high crude oil prices force the world economy to go into a recession, which will, in turn, affect the countries that feed the local call center boom.

For now, however, Amanda can rest easy that she will continue to afford new cellular phones, new clothes, and expensive meals courtesy of her call center job.

Already, however, she's beginning to see signs of a glut in the industry and wants to explore new career paths.

"When I look around, I see there are so many of us," she says. "I want to learn to do something else soon."

The call center-dependent property market may want to take its cue from her.

"As a veterinarian, I know how important it is to maintain a healthy environment for breeding pigs for commercial purposes, not only to ensure profitability but also the safety of consumers.

In my 20 years of running a livestock enterprise, I have realized the importance of sustainable development to ensure long term viability by bringing down the cost of operations and, more importantly, lowering the cost of our products for consumers.

This means spending for modernization of operations, and this is where the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) comes in. DBP offers various loan facilities that encourage sustainable development and the protection of the environment.

DBP helped my piggery grow over the years by providing loans for expansion. Last year, DBP granted my company, Red Dragon Farms, a loan to modernize its operations and make it more profitable while at the same time helping our piggery become more environment-friendly.

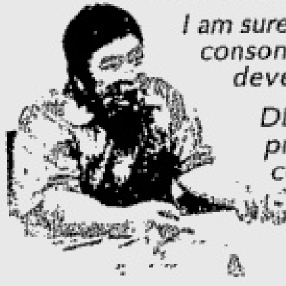
Funded under DBP's Environmental Infrastructure Support Credit Program II and Industrial Pollution Control Loan Program II, the loans financed the construction of piggery buildings using multi-site and cool cell technology and a waste management system. Because of the effective waste management and evaporative cooling systems, there is tremendous amount of water saved in the farm. The farm also provides a healthy environment for pigs as well as to the surrounding community.

At present, Red Dragon Farms is negotiating with PhilBio - a bio-energy company - for the establishment of a biogas system that will use waste products in the piggery farm to produce methane for its power needs.

I am sure DBP will be happy to help finance this project which is in consonance with its loan programs that promote sustainable development and the protection of the environment.

DBP understands that helping Red Dragon Farms improve its production efficiency will also benefit the community, the consumers and most especially, the environment."

Dr. Robert Hui Lo, DVM, ME
Owner
Red Dragon Farms



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Aussies may help RP use mapping technology

To confirm mining data before investing

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE AUSTRALIANS are considering helping the Philippines use a satellite mapping technology in an effort to confirm data on mineral reserves that would help investments flow in.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said in a briefing yesterday that Australian mining companies had been requesting confirmation of Philippine data during a mining roadshow in Melbourne earlier this month.

The roadshow was the latest leg in the local mining industry's global swing to revitalize the development of local mines.

During the roadshow, Favila joined government representatives—including Delia Albert, Presidential Adviser on Mineral Development—and officials of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines.

Government data show that the country's mineral deposits are spread across the country, with explored and identified metallic and non-metallic reserves estimated at $965 billion or P54 trillion.

Of the 9 million hectares of mineralized land, only 420,000 hectares are covered by mining permits and about 8.6 million hectares of land rich in mineral deposits are waiting to be explored.

Industry experts said it would need $6 billion to $8 billion in investments to develop the country's mineral resources.

"It's not that the Australian firms are (doubtful) of our data, it is just that they have the most advanced mining technology and they want to use that technology to optimize returns on the investments they might commit," Favila said.

The trade chief said the use of satellite mapping technology in the country could be made through a grant from the Australian government.

Also, Favila said Australian companies had apprised him of their concerns over the integrity of land titling and the security of tenure in the mining sites.

"They are also concerned about the integrity of agreements as well as the pockets of resistance directed against the projects of those firms that are already investing here," he said.

Last month, Chamber of Mines of the Philippines president Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez said a total of $339.7 million worth of investments had flowed in through the 23 projects that the local industry had promoted in various international roadshows.

Romualdez said the amount represented projects that have either started operations or were in the development and construction phases of work.

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Jollibee Q2 profit jumps 26.8%

DESPITE rising inflation that changed the consumers' spending habits, the fastfood chain continued to enjoy brisk sales.

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AN EFFECTIVE cost management has boosted the net profit of fast food giant Jollibee Foods Corp. by 26.8 percent in the second quarter of the year to P536.2 million despite rising inflation that adversely affected consumer spending.

Profit in the first semester reached P894.6 million, up 11.1 percent from year-ago level, the company said in a disclosure.

"Recovering profit margin from rising inflation will help fuel our long term growth. Margin recovery during the quarter was achieved by a combination of cost improvement and gradual price adjustments on our products," Jollibee chief executive officer Tony Tan Caktiong said.

Jollibee's system wide sales climbed 11.8 percent to P10.2 billion in the second quarter from the level in the same period last year.

System wide sales for the Jollibee brand grew 8.3 percent in the second quarter, while the sales of oriental fast food chain Chowking were up 14.6 percent. Greenwich sales were likewise higher by 9.7 percent. Bread and pastries store Delifrance posted a 30.6-percent jump in sales in the second quarter. In the foreign market, sales of Yonghe King in China grew 18.6 percent.

In the first half, system wide sales jumped 13.1 percent to P19.2 billion.

SMIC income grows by 22%

SM INVESTMENTS Corp., the flagship company of mall tycoon Henry Sy Jr., said its net income for April to June, the first quarter of its current fiscal year, grew by 22 percent to P1.24 billion from P1.01 billion in the same period last year.

Total revenue rose 10 percent to P11.02 billion during the quarter ending June 30 from last year's P10.03 billion. SMIC's retail business, through its 24 SM department stores, accounted for 70 percent of total revenue.

From April to June this year, retail sales reached P7.68 billion, 6.5 percent higher than the P7.2 billion in the same quarter last year.

The growth in sales was due mainly to the opening of two new department stores in Dasmariñas, Cavite and Batangas in 2004, and the launching of the newly-renovated SM Makati and SM Delgado in Iloilo. The SM Advantage Card program, which offers rewards and discounts to cardholders, also encouraged customer loyalty.

Rental revenue from malls increased 11 percent to P2 billion during the three-month period from P1.8 billion in the same period last year.

Equity in net earnings of associates, namely Banco de Oro and China Bank , grew 124 percent to P503 million from year-ago level brought about mainly by a 42-percent jump in BDO's first quarter 2005 net income. SMIC holds a 46.6-percent interest in BDO and a 21-percent interest in China Bank.

SMIC's total cost and expenses increased by 9 percent to P8.7 billion from April to June this year from nearly P8 billion in the same months in 2004. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Robinsons posts ₱1.2B in gross earnings

ROBINSONS Land Corp. said its gross revenue from April to June, the third quarter of its fiscal year 2005, hit P1.26 billion.

This brought its year-to-date revenue to P3.84 billion, up from last year's P3.4 billion.

The company said its performance was boosted by higher rental income from shopping malls, higher sales from housing and building divisions, and the improved profitability of its hotels.

The commercial centers division, which operates RLC's 18 malls all over the country, contributed 60 percent of the gross revenue.

The company's flagship malls, Robinsons Galleria and Robinsons Place Manila, continued to enjoy excellent rental income, while new malls Robinsons Place Pioneer, Robinsons Place Cainta, and Robinsons Place Lipa, and Robinsons Place Dasmariñas also contributed significantly to the rental growth.

RLC's high rise buildings division registered a 19-percent growth in revenues on the strength of brisk sales from its six residential condominium projects around Metro Manila.

Nenaco seen to net ₱150M

By Clarissa S. Batino

AFTER years of losses, Negros Navigation Co., the shipping unit of Metro Pacific Corp., is expected to post a net income of P150 million this year.

Nenaco president Sulficio Tagud Jr. said the bulk of the projected earnings would come from the sale of assets.

The shipping company is expected to start posting profits only by 2007, based on its 10-year rehabilitation plan approved by the court last year. During the rehabilitation period, Nenaco will restructure P2.4 billion in debts.

Nenaco's losses have been pulling down Metro Pacific's finances. A recovery of the shipping company this year would allow its parent company to also post a better number.

"We started to make money in the first half. We expect to be in the black this year with a net income of P150 million, including non-recurring gains from the sale of assets," said Tagud in an interview.

In the first half, Nenaco posted a 16-percent growth in passenger and cargo volumes. The second half, however, may be weaker as business during this period is usually slower for the shipping industry, according to Metro Pacific president Jose Maria Lim.

Tagud said Nenaco would sell three of its older vessels in the second half as part of the company's refleeting program.

Alaska profit down 26% due to rising costs

PUBLICLY-LISTED Alaska Milk Corp. said its net income in the first six months of the year dropped 26 percent to P160 million from last year's P215 million, due to higher expenses.

Higher selling prices of all milk products and the strong volume performance of the ready-to-drink milk business helped lift revenue during the first half of the year to P2.4 billion from P2.34 billion in the same period last year.

Selling prices of selected Alaska products were increased by an average of 7 percent effective Feb. 1 to mitigate the rise in raw material costs.

For the six-month period , cost of sales and operating expenses rose 6 percent to P2.2 billion from last year's P2.08 billion due to higher prices of major raw materials such as skimmed milk powder, coconut oil, refined sugar, and of packaging products such as tinplates.

In the second quarter, net income rose 9 percent to P67 million from P62 million in the same period last year.

Alaska's revenue in the second quarter grew 22 percent to P1.2 billion from P1.01 billion in the same period last year.

Higher selling prices of milk products and strong volume growth of the powdered milk and ultra high temperature (UHT) ready-to-drink milk businesses pushed second quarter revenue higher year-on-year.

Cost of sales and operating expenses in the second quarter increased by 21 percent to P1.15 billion from P954 million a year ago.

Consumer demand for milk products—evaporated , sweetened condensed and powdered milk—remained soft during the second quarter as inflationary pressure, brought about by higher crude oil prices, tempered consumer spending for both food and non-food items. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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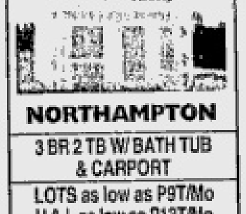

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IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE BUSINESS SEPARATION AND UNBUNDLING PLAN (BSUP) AND ACCOUNTING COST ALLOCATION MANUAL (ACAM) PURSUANT TO THE PROVISION OF SECTION 36 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9136 AND RULE 10 OF ITS IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS.

ERC CASE NO. 2005-157 MC

CAMARINES SUR II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CASURECO II).
Applicant
x - x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given of the filing by applicant, Camarines Sur II Electric Cooperative, Inc (CASURECO II) on April 5, 2005 of an application, docketed as ERC Case No. 2005-157 MC, for approval of its: (1) Business Separation and Unbunding Plan (BSUP); and (2) Accounting and Cost Allocation Manual (ACAM), in accordance with the provisions of Section 36 of Republic Act No. 9136 (the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 or the EPIRA) and Rule 10 of its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The Commission has set the application for hearing on September 05, 2005 at ten-thirty in the morning (10:30 A.M.) at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. Such parties who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings, may request before the date of hearing, they be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such interested party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed by the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR**. Chairman, and the Honorable, **JESUS N. ALCORDO, RAUF A. TAN** and **ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN**, Commissioners, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 4th day of July, 2005 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTANEDA
Executive Director III

(PDI – August 16, 2005)

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Palscon purges its membership

THE PHILIPPINE Association of Local Service Contractors Inc. (Palscon) has started its semi-annual assessment on the compliance of its members with the standard for acceptable and proper business practices in the industry of service contracting. It has started monitoring its memberships' regular compliance with provisions of Articles 106 –109 and payments of benefits. Two of its members are now under investigation for alleged violation of the Minimum Wage Law and delay / non-payment of SSS and other benefits.

Palscon president, Lilia Linda Ang of STEP Inc. has requested SSS, Philhealth, and HDMF for a listing of all delinquent service contractors with history of non-payment of benefits and with legal cases with to weed out non-legitimate and non-compliant agencies. This general listing would also include manpower coops, which are allegedly violating the SSS, Philhealth, and HDMF laws.

Palscon vice president, lawyer Giovanni Melgar and the members of the monitoring and compliance committee would go through the listings provided by these agencies and institute the necessary action called for like advising, warning, and/or assistance in becoming compliant.

Former presidents of Palscon, Ma. Linda Dichoson and Fermin Cunanan, comprising the monitoring and compliance committee have instructed Palscon members to submit their latest remittances to SSS, Philhealth, ECC, and Pag-IBIG. Membership committee chair Rowena Maceren has also asked non-attending members to explain their absences from GMMs and/or other activities.

President Ang is also poised to submit to Director Ricardo Martinez of DOLE-NCR a listing of 'fly-by-night' and illegitimate service contractors in compliance with Palscon's memorandum of agreement with DOLE-NCR.

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Services - INGERSOLL RAND SSR EP 75; INGERSOLL RAND SSR EP 50 SE (1996); (2) INGERSOLL RAND SSR EP 30 SE; KAESER AS 36 Screw Type Air Compressors (1998); IHI IMC 22 B Air Compressor; (3) MEIJI / HITACHI Receiver Mounted Air Compressors; (12) Air Receivers/Dryers; MIURA EH 1500 x Boiler; (6) Cooling Towers; (4) Water Pumps; Water Treatment Plant
Paint Plant - COMPLETE Paint Plant for white goods incl. Phosphating Line, Spray Booths, Ovens; Overhead Conveyors, etc.
Miscellaneous - Asstd. Conveyors; (2) Vacuum Lifters; T.V. Test Equipment; Refrigerator Test Equipment; Asstd. Hand/Power Tools; Asstd. HSS Cutting Tools; Safety Equipment; Packing/Strapping Tools; Asstd. Electricals; A Large Qty. of Scrap Molds/Jigs; H.D. Copper Cable; Factory Furnishings; Racking; Asstd. Spare Parts; Steel Stocks, etc.

On View: Mon 22nd & Tue 23rd August 2005 - 9am to 5pm
Refundable Deposit: Php20,000 (upon registration)
Please bring valid ID to be presented during registration

ONLINE AUCTION

At.: Manalac Avenue, Bo. Tanyag, Bagumbayan, Taguig
Sale Closes: Thursday, 25th August 2005 - 6:00pm
On View: 22 & 23 August 2005 9am to 5pm or earlier by appointment

Refrigerator Production Plant; T.V. Assembly & Test Plant including: - Thermoformers; Vacuum Formers; Injection Molders; Sheet Metal Equipment; Test Equipment, etc.

In over 100 lots including: -

Polyurethane Injection - CANNON CRIOS "A system 40" Polyurethane Injection m/c (1997); CANNON CRIOS "A system 100 STD" Polyurethane Injection m/c (1994); (35) ULVAC Rotary Oil Vacuum Pumps (1994); TOYO FB-HS 50 x 74 Refrigerant Charging m/c (1996); TOYO ROC 90 Oil & Gas Charging m/c (1996); TOYO R-50-2V Vacuum Oil Purifier (1996)
Vacuum Forming - ASANO FLT-641-2-EX Straight Vacuum Forming m/c (1996); ASANO FC-6APA-W-2EX Vacuum Forming m/c (1984); ASANO FRT-935 EX Rotary Vacuum Forming m/c (1984); SANK SEIKI 1208-20 20 Ton Trimming Press (1982); FUJI IC 006-A Stainless Steel Heatless Test Enclosure
Injection Moulding - MEIKE M650-DM 650 Ton Injection Molder (1982); MEIKE M450 - DM 450 Ton Injection Molder (1983); TOSHIBA IS 220 GN-10A Injection Molder (1997); NISSEI ES 400-Eject Injection Molder (1999); (4) REIKEN Water Chillers KCA 10RC/KCA 08 RC/ KLA 06 RC/ KCW (1997); MATSUI PO 200 Pellet Pre heat Oven (1982)
Pressing - OKAMOTO DCP-200 Ton Double Column Stamping Press (1978); NEAGARE NSK-150 Ton Double Column Hydraulic Press (1979); AMADA-CLEARING "Torc Pac" 110 Ton Open Fronted Power Press (1983); CHIN FONG GI 110 Ton Open Fronted Power Press (1997); OKAMOTO UP 100 Ton Open Fronted Power Press (1979); YAMAZAKI 100 Ton Open Fronted Power Press (1983); AMADA "Torc Parc" 60 Ton Open Fronted Power Press (1984)
Sheet Metal - MECANICA STAMPI 90-007-00 Roll Forming m/c (1990); AMADA RG 50 Hyd. Press Brake (1995)
Welding - NISSHO MUS-125-226 N Automatic Multiple Welding Station (1983); TOKYO TOA S3B TD 53 Uniprod Welding m/c (1992); TOKYO TOA PO-100 A Projection Welding m/c (1985); KAWASAKI SP 75 B Spot Welder (1990); BENZONIC BW 1528 P Plastic Welding m/c (2003)
Soldering & Inspection - DSK Model L 400, Automatic PCB Soldering Line (1996); (2) NITTO SEIKO 601 Eyelet Setter/Punch (1996); NITTO SEIKO MPI-011 Pin Inserter (1997); NORDSON FM 153 Foam Melt m/c (1997)
Assembly - (2) CYCLOP-COPPEX LSP 2 Strapping m/c's (1995); ISHIZU Aluminum Taping m/c,
T.V. Test - TESCO Paint 70 MB Defects Analyzer; ADVANTEST Spectrum Analyzer; IWATSU Oscilloscope; (2) LEADER Stereoscopes; MINOLTA Colour Analyzer
Refrigerator Test - ESPEC Scientific Oven, SHARP Scientific Balance, BUCHI Roto Vapor/Bath; OKIMEE Viscometer; KYOTO Moisture Titrator, TOKUSHU Lab. Mixer; Asstd SINAGAWA Wet Gas Meter; ECOTECH Gas Leak Detector, etc

PLEASE NOTE - NO SLIPPERS/SANDALS, NO SLEEVELESS SHIRTS, NO SHORTS, NO SMOKING, NO VIDEO/CAMERA, NO CHILDREN - WILL BE ALLOWED ON THE AUCTION PREMISES
PLEASE CONTACT THE AUCTIONEERS OFFICE FOR MORE DETAILS

GoIndustry Henry Butcher
INDUSTRIAL ASSET DISPOSAL AND VALUATION

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Fax No.: +63 2 831-9507
E-mail: manila@henrybutcher.com

![POWER SECTOR ASSETS & LIABILITIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION]

PSALM
POWER SECTOR
ASSETS & LIABILITIES
MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation ("*PSALM*") Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee ("*Committee*") invites interested parties to participate in and bid in the Second Round of Bidding for the privatization of the following:

600 MW Batangas Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant located at San Rafael, Calaca, Batangas

(the "*Asset*"). The Asset is being privatized on an "*as is where is*" basis.

Interested parties are required to submit a Letter of Interest ("*LOI*") to PSALM which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax number of the interested party, name of the principal contact, signed by an authorized representative, and with the latest audited financial statement attached to the submission. All LOIs must be received by PSALM at the PSALM Office, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, not later than 5:00 p.m. on August 23, 2005 (the "*LOI Submission Deadline*"). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of RA 9136, in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand U.S. Dollars (U.S. $ 1,000.00) (the "*Participation Fee*"). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking and Participation Fee must be received by PSALM on or before 5:00 p.m. of August 24, 2005 to entitle an interested party further participation in the privatization of the Asset.

The Bidding Package, which includes the bidding procedures, shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from August 16, 2005 until August 24, 2005 at 5:00 p.m. (the "*Deadline*") at the PSALM Office. In accordance with the bidding procedures, only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package by the Deadline or a consortium which includes an interested party will be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence	: August 16 – October 7, 2005
Pre-bid Conference	: August 31, 2005, 2:00 p.m. at the PSALM Office
Deadline for Receipt of Bids by PSALM	: To be announced to Interested Bidders at a later date by PSALM

References to dates and times shall be based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City.

Interested parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to Nine Million U.S. Dollars (US$ 9,000,000.00) in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, confirmed by a local bank and acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guarantee prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction. A two-envelope bidding system will be adopted. Further details on the privatization of the Asset are contained in the Bidding Package.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at telephone number (632) 893-8202 loc. 202 or 206, telefax number (632) 840-3896 or e-mail address fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify parties for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) **RAPHAEL P.M. LOTILLA**
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

(August 15, 16 and 17, 2005)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Securities and Exchange Commission, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the REPAIR AND RENOVATION OF THE BASEMENT, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.

a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
b. Partnership duly organized under laws of the Philippines and of which at least seventy five percent (75%) of the interest belongs to citizen of the Philippines; or
c. Corporation duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least seventy five percent (75%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizen of the Philippines; or
d. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) and

Bidders/contractors should have a valid and current License and Registration issued by PCAB.

License	at least "Category C"
Registration	at least "SMALL B"

Bidder should have a similar completed contract within a period of five (5) years and must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget of the contract to be bid.

The Approved Budget for the Contract is Php 2,481,682.00

Application for Eligibility and Eligibility Forms will be issued starting **August 17 to 26, 2005** at the General Services Division, 4th floor, SEC Building, EDSA Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, upon presentation of PCAB license and a payment of non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00).

Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent and opening of the Eligibility Envelope shall be on August 26, 10:00 a.m. at the Market Regulation Department (MRD) Conference Room, 6th Floor, SEC Building.

A complete set of bidding documents may be obtained by the eligible bidder starting **August 31 to September 7, 2005** at the General Services Division, 4th floor, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00)**. For further details, please contact Asst. Director Romeo G. Dauag at Tel. No. 727-3320.

Pre-Bid conference will be on **September 7, 10:00 A.M.** at the Market Regulation Department (MRD), Conference Room, 6th Floor, SEC Building.

Deadline for submission and opening of Technical and Price Proposal will be on **September 21, 10:00 A.M.** at the Market Regulation Department (MRD) Conference Room, 6th Floor, SEC Building. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents will no longer be accepted.

Republic Act 9184, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) shall govern all particulars relative to Eligibility, Bid Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Evaluation, Post Qualification and Awards of Contracts.

The SEC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formalities therein and to award the contract to the bidder whose proposal as evaluated is most advantageous to the Commission.

SEC also assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that any award will be made.

(Sgd.) JOSE AQUINO
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – August 16 & 23, 2005)

CENTRAL PANGASINAN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
San Carlos City, Pangasinan
Tel. # (075) 532-2222 / 532-3146

INVITATION TO BID

The Central Pangasinan Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CENPELCO) with office address at Padilla St., San Carlos City, Pangasinan invites all qualified bidders for the implementation of approved electrification projects by the Department of Energy (DoE) within the Municipality of Sual, Pangasinan pursuant to Energy Regulations No. 1-94, and section 66 of Republic Act (R.A.) 9136 and Rule 29, Part A of Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9136.

PACKAGE I – Supply of Labor and Materials for the construction of distribution line to twenty three (23) sitios in the Municipality of Sual, Pangasinan with a total circuit kilometer of 24.760 kms. broken down as follows:

a. Single Phase – 8.740 kms.
b. Open Secondary – 10.570 kms.
c. Under Built – 5.450 kms

PACKAGE II

1 Retrieval of existing one (1) 5 MVA Power Transformer
2. Supply and delivery of the following substation equipment including installation and commissioning:

a. 10/12.5 MVA Power Transformer	1 set
b. 69 KV SF6 Power Circuit Breaker	1 set
c. 15 KV Feeder Protection Equipment	
c.1 15 KV SF6 Circuit Breaker (Main)	1 set
c.2 15 KV Vacuum Circuit Breakers (Feeder)	4 sets
c.3 Accessories and Miscellaneous	1 set

All interested parties can secure bid documents to PBAC secretariat starting August 17, 2005. In addition, a non refundable fee of Seven Hundred Fifty Pesos (P750.00) shall be paid before securing said documents. Submission of sealed bid will be on August 26, 2005 (Friday) at 2:00 PM (1400 hrs) at CENPELCO main office, Padilla St., San Carlos City, Pangasinan wherein your bid will be opened in your presence or that of your representative.

Request further to include in your sealed bids/proposals the delivery date, terms of payment, schedule of activities and commissioning period for evaluation purposes. Bid for one package only is acceptable. The BID BOND is either in the form of cash or manager's check equivalent to two and a half percent (2 ½%) of the total bid price or surety bond equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the total bid price. Bid bond less than the required amount will be automatically disqualified. Bids/proposals submitted beyond the specified date and time will not be accepted.

CENPELCO RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, WAIVE ANY OF THE REQUIRED FORMALITY THEREIN AND ACCEPTS THE BIDS ONLY DEEMED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COOPERATIVE.

(Sgd.) RODRIGO F. CORPUZ
PBAC CHAIRMAN

Noted by:
(Sgd.) ENGR. EDGARDO R. PIAMONTE
Executive Officer/Project Supervisor

(PDI – August 14 & 16, 2005)

CENTRAL PANGASINAN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
San Carlos City, Pangasinan
Tel No (075) 532-2222 / 532-3146

INVITATION TO BID

Central Pangasinan Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CENPELCO) with office address at Padilla St., San Carlos City, Pangasinan is in need of electronic KWH Meters and its accessories, Instrument Transformers and Capacitors. Listed below are the required specifications and quantity:

PACKAGE I - KWH Meters and Accessories

	PARTICULARS	QUANTITY
1	Electronic Meter Vector II, KV2C, Bottom Connector Type, Fitzal FM 48A, Class 20 in a base transformer Range 120-240, nominally 10% - 20%. (Including after sales technical support services)	25 units
2	Single Phase Electronic Meter, Form 3S Class 10, Including Meter Base.	10 units
3.	Soft Switch Holder	1 pc
4.	R. Switch, Four (4) Channel for KV2 / KV2 C	1 pc
5	M. Switch for KV2 / KV2 C	1 pc.
6.	O. Switch for KV2 / KV2 C	1 pc

PACKAGE II - Instrument Transformers

	PARTICULARS	QUANTITY
1	Potential Transformer, 70:1, 15 kV, Primary Voltage 8400, Secondary Voltage 120, Accuracy Class 0.3	9 units
2.	Current Transformer 300:5, 15 KV, Outdoor Type, Accuracy Class 0.3	8 units
3	Current Transformer 200:5, 600 V, Accuracy Class 0.3	30 units

PACKAGE III - Line Capacitors

	PARTICULARS	QUANTITY
1.	Power Shunt Capacitor 100 kVAR, 7620 Volts, 60 Hz, 95 kV BIL, Single Phase Double Bushing, Outdoor Type Built-in Discharge Resistor	25 units
2	Power Shunt Capacitor 50 kVAR, 7620 Volts, 60 Hz. 95 kV BIL, Single Phase Double Bushing, Outdoor Type Built-in Discharge Resistor	30 units
3.	Power Shunt Capacitor 25 kVAR, 7620 Volts, 60 Hz, 95 kV BIL, Single Phase Double Bushing, Outdoor Type Built-in Discharge Resistor	45 units

We are inviting responsible suppliers to participate in a sealed bid to be submitted to PBAC on August 23, 2005 (Tuesday) at 2:00 p.m. (1400 hrs) at CENPELCO main office, Padilla St., San Carlos City, Pangasinan wherein your bid will be opened in your presence or that of your representative.

Request further to include in your sealed bids/proposals the delivery date, terms of payment and availability of stock for evaluation purposes. Bid for one or two items only is acceptable. The BID BOND is either in the form of cash or manager's check equivalent to two and a half percent (2½%) of the total bid price or surety bond equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the total bid price. Bid bond less than the required amount will be automatically disqualified. Bids/proposals submitted beyond the specified date and time will not be accepted.

CENPELCO RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, WAIVE ANY OF THE REQUIRED FORMALITY THEREIN AND ACCEPTS THE BIDS ONLY DEEMED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COOPERATIVE.

(Sgd.) RODRIGO F. CORPUZ
PBAC Chairman

Noted by:
(Sgd.) ENGR. EDGARDO R. PIAMONTE
Executive Officer/Project Supervisor

(PDI - Aug. 14 & 16, 2005)

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Environmental Management Bureau-Cordillera Administrative Region (EMB-CAR) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Baguio City is inviting interested Suppliers of Air Quality Monitoring Equipment to submit bids for the following:

DESCRIPTION: Supply and installation of Continuous Automatic Ambient Air Quality Monitoring System that would suit Baguio City's topography and Climate.

Approved DBM Budget Coat: P 10,000,000.00

Interested suppliers/bidders may submit documents for eligibility check as per RA 9184 (Envelope A) on or before August 23, 2005 at EMB-CAR, DENR, Gibraltar, Baguio City upon payment of a refundable fee of P500.00 to qualify for bidding.

A pre-bid conference shall be held on August 23, 2005 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning at the EMB-CAR Conference Room, DENR-CAR Compound, Gibraltar Road, Baguio City. Deadline for the submission of bids and a refundable fee of 2.5% Surety Bond of the bidded amount (Envelope B) will be on September 5, 2005 on or before 12:00 o'clock noon. A product presentation of qualified bidders and opening of Bids will follow at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of the same day.

The EMB-CAR reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding or not to award the contract as provided for under the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act.

(Sgd.) **ENGR. ROLANDO C. REYES**
Chairman, EMB-CAR BAC

(PDI--Aug 11 & 16, 2005)

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On the instruction of UCPB Leasing & Finance Corp.

ONLINE AUCTION

SEN FUNG Hydraulic Rollforming Machine

At.: Manila, Philippines
Sale Closes: Thursday, 25 August 2005 - 6:00pm

Additional Information

Uncoiler-1.3m width, hydraulic expander type, 5MT cap.; Entry Guide-1.3m width; Roller Formed Section - 21 stations, 1.3m width x 9.3m long; Hydraulic Forming Tile Section - 1.3 max width, automatic w/ die mould; Hydraulic Cut - off Section - 1.15 max width, automatic w/ die mould cutter; Run-out Table - Roller Idler Type, 1.2m x 6m long; Hydraulic Oil Cooler - Wexten, Model CO-60PS; System complete w/ hydraulic power pack, control panel and standard accessories

Viewing: Strictly by Appointment
To register please visit our website: www.henrybutcher.com

For further information please contact Obert Cinco at
Tel: 852 2910 loc. 109 Email: obert.cinco@henrybutcher.com

GoIndustry Henry Butcher

HENRY BUTCHER INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES INC.
Rm. 102 Jolliland Bldg., 670 Edsa, Pasay City, Philippines
Tel No.: +(63-2) 852-2910 * 11 Fax No.: +(63-2) 831-9507
E-mail: manila@henrybutcher.com
Website: www.henrybutcher.com/www.goindustry.com

NFA holds training on Thermal Processes for Canned Foods

THE FOOD Development Center (FDC) of the National Food Authority (NFA) will conduct a training course on the "Establishment of Thermal Processes for Canned Foods" on Sept. 13 to 16 at the FDC Compound, FTI Complex, Tagig City. The training course aims to upgrade the technical capability of participants from the canned food industry in establishing adequate thermal processes for canned foods. It is designed for technical personnel with educational background in food science, food engineering, microbiology or related fields and industry experience in food canning. The course will consist of lecture-discussions, hands-on exercises and demonstrations, slides presentation and examination. The course fee if P6,200 per participant inclusive of meals and a shuttle bus service from Ayala Center, Makati. For further inquiries, contact Amelia S. Bautista, FDC-NFA, FTI Complex, Tagig City at 838-4014; 838-4561; 838-4478 and fax at 838-4017 and 838-4692 and at E-mail address: Infofdc@pacific.net.ph.

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Monday to Sunday
12:00 noon
Day before publication

I had fought a good fight of faith in my military profession.
I will now enter into the kingdom of my God
with all His angels and His saints.
Lord, hold my peace like a river and my righteousness
like the waves of the sea.
Amen.

Our Beloved

COL FRANCISCO "Frankie" APOLINAR AGUDON GSC PC (Ret)

of Passi City, Iloilo & Fairview, Quezon City
October 28, 1928 to August 15, 2005

peacefully joined our Lord on the Feast day of Our Lady of the Assumption at the age of 76.

We the bereaved family **Caridad Padernilla** (†), **Wenifreda Dejelo**; children **Yolanda & Henry**, **Francisco Jr. & Evelyn**, **Myrna & Joel** (†), **Falcon & Ma. Antonia**, **Ma. Wenda & Cris**, **Francisco III & Hanil**, **Francisco** (†) and **Francisco V**; grandchildren **Olivia Lou**, **Victoria Anne & Byron Francis**; **Francis Ian**, **Ivette Lyn & Christine Eve**; **Joel II**, **Hyacinth Ann**, **Henry Oliver**, **Prudence Marie & Arianne Marie**; **Francisco Andrei IV**, **Frank Alphonso & Oscar Wendel**; and **Leanne**; great grandchildren **Sebastian**, **Raphaelle**, **Nathaniel**, **Allyssa** and **Emmanuel**, brothers & sisters **Coronation** (†), **Jorge** (†), **Milagros**, **Narciso**, **Hermluio** (†), **Perfecto**, **Reynaldo** (†), **Eduardo** (†), **Doroteo Jr.**, **Zoilo** (†), **Ma. Nabel** and **Toribio**; brothers-in-law & sisters-in-law, nephews & nieces, other relatives, friends, comrades in arms and to those who in one way or another touched the life of our beloved Tatay. We request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Nacional Memorial Homes, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

On August 20, 2005 (Saturday), his remains will be laid to rest in his crypt at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, Tandang Sora, Q.C. after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Nacional Memorial Homes.

(PLEASE OMIT FLOWERS)

SUSANA REFUMANTA AGTAY

Died on the 28th of July 2005
in Bremerton, Washington, USA
She leaves her treasured memories in the hearts of her husband:
ERNESTO AGTAY

Her children:

- **Rosario-Agtay-Baute and Carlos Baute**
- **Ray Agtay**
- **Lourdes Agtay**
- **Dulce Agtay-Yap and Isagani Yap**
- **Gani and Evangeline Agtay**

She will also be deeply missed by numerous cousins, nephews, nieces and close friends.

A woman of Faith and Dedicated with zealous leadership.

Our dearly beloved

JUANITA BRILLANTE SORIANO

Died in the Grace and Goodness of the Lord on the 14th of August 2005 at the age of 79.

Her family requests relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul and to remember her always in their prayers.

Her remains lie in state at the Sta. Rita Parish Church, Philam Homes, West Ave., QC and will be transferred to the Christ The King Parish Church, Project 7, QC on Aug. 17, 2005.

Interment will be on Thursday, Aug. 18, 2005 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:30 AM Mass.

LUCILA O. SAN-GIL

passed away in the Grace of our Lord on August 15, 2005 at the age of 82.

Her bereaved family, brother & sisters, nephews, grandchildren, other relatives and friends request the readers to join us in praying for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her body lies in state at the Abby of Our Lady of Montserrat, (San Beda College) in Mendiola starting from August 15 & 17, 2005 and will be transferred to San Vicente Chapel, Sta. Rita Parish, Pampanga.

Interment will be on the 18th day of August 2005 at Sta. Rita Pampanga after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

15th Death Anniversary
In Endless Loving Memory of the late

BENJAMIN H. FELIPE, MD

who died on August 16, 1990.

Masses will offered today, August 16, 2005
at the following Churches:

Gravesite, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City	3:00 PM
Immaculate Conception Parish, Lantana, Cubao, QC	6:00 PM
Mt. Carmel Church, E. Rodriguez, New Manila, QC	6:00 PM
Christ the King Seminary, E. Rodriguez, QC	6:00 AM
Sacred Heart Parish Church, J. Jimenez St., Kamuning, QC	6:00 AM

His family request their relatives, friends and the pious readers to pray for his eternal repose.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
187 Real St., Zapote Alabang, Las Piñas;
Tels. 873-0507; 873-0024

• MAKATI

DON BOSCO CHAPELS
Pasay Road, Makati City; Tel. 894-5932 to 34

FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
865 J.P. Rizal St., Poblacion, Makati City;
Tels. 890-3556; 899-8191

LOYOLA MEMORIAL CHAPELS
EDSA cor. Bernardino St., Guadalupe, Makati City; Tels. 895-1011 to 19

MALABED FUNERAL SERVICE
3-A Coronado St., Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City;
Tel. 890-63-18

SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
Forbes Park, Makati City;
Tel. Nos. 843-8838/30; Fax No. 843-9223

ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
Magallanes Village, Makati City;
Tels 852-8228; 852-7284

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Option 1: 0 percent interest. An irresistible 50 percent down payment, 12 months, 0 percent interest deal on the energetic V50 is offered. For as low as P95,625 per month for 12 months, owners can already enjoy the luxury they deserve. (*Option 1: 0 percent interest, 50 percent down payment, 12 months-to-pay Ownership Package)

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Option 3: Straight cash off offers a special cash discount of P50,000 for cash payments on this stylishly sporty Volvo.

Option 4: Credit plus clients who pay cash can choose to use their P50,000 cash discount as a credit memo or gift certificate. They can use this either for their future service workshop, body and paint shop, or genuine parts needs. They can also opt to use the gift certificate for genuine accessories that they want to add to their new V50 or simply use it for their registration and insurance renewals.

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Choose one from the five highly appealing offers and enjoy the best value that naturally comes with every Volvo purchase. Enjoy the Volvo driving experience by scheduling a test-drive by visiting or calling any of the Volvo showrooms. The Volvo V50 Luxury Package is available until Aug. 31 only.

Engineered for enjoyment, the Volvo V50 is an energetic partner that hosts numerous functions with intuitive sense. Everything about the Volvo V50 drivetrain is clean and clever. It's a model of advanced engineering that turns fuel into fun.

Wherever you sit in the V50, the deceptively spacious interior provides an air of discreet luxury. It combines unsurpassed seating comfort with carefully selected materials to provide an environment nearly as inviting as one's own living room.

In the Volvo V50, the power train and chassis interact to provide a harmonious balance between response and comfort. The smooth, powerful five-cylinder engine is the very heart of the driving experience. Power output is easily accessible without pushing the engine, and response is instantaneous. Low internal friction and the very latest engine technology featuring electronic engine management and variable valve timing result in both dazzling performance and modest fuel consumption. The Volvo Makati Showroom and Aftersales Service Center is located at 2272 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City while The Volvo Ortigas Showroom and Aftersales Center is located at 88 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. For details and inquiries, please call 893-6621 to 22 (Makati Showroom) or 637-0414 to 15 (Ortigas Showroom).

In Manila, Viking Cars, Incorporated is the official distributor of Volvo cars. The Volvo Makati office, showroom and Aftersales Service Center are located at 2272 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City while The Volvo Ortigas Showroom and Aftersales Center is located at 88 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Volvo Cebu will soon open around fourth quarter this year. The 2005 Volvo automobile line includes the sporty S60, the flagship S80 luxury sedan, the rugged XC70 Cross Country, the compact S40 and V50 sportswagon and the seven-seater 2.5-L turbocharged AWD XC90. For details and inquiries, please call 893-6621 to 22 (Makati Showroom) or 637-0414 to 15 (Ortigas Showroom).

PLDT BACKS 14TH NRCE

The country's telecommunications giant, PLDT, reaffirms its support for the 14th National Retailers Conference and Stores 2005 Asia Expo as platinum Sponsor. Organized by the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA: tel. nos. – 687-4180/4181; email - pra@nwave.net), the NRCE will be held on Aug. 17 to 19 (expo) and Aug. 18 to 19 (conference) at the Edsa Shangrila Hotel, Mandaluyong. A partner of the NRCE for 4 years, PLDT continues to strengthen its position in the retail market. Shown in photo during the contract signing were: Shopwise president and PRA chair Bienvenido Tantoco III; PLDT business solutions head corporate product research and development Joey S. Limjap; Sporthouse and PRA president Mars Chua; PLDT business solutions category head Pablo Apostol; and Picture City president and PRA VP-national affairs lawyer Paul Santos.

Shell launches art season with Vinluan Workshop in Davao

PILIPINAS Shell, organizer of the country's longest-running and most prestigious art competition, launched the opening salvo of its art season by bringing famed abstractionist Nestor Vinluan to Mindanao in a one-day lecture-workshop for students of visual arts. The 2005 Shell Art Interaction Program was held in July at the Philippine Women's College of Fine Arts and Culture in Matina, Davao.

The annual interaction program was organized in consultation with university and college teachers to supplement art education in schools outside Metro Manila. The forum is a lead-up to the Shell National Students Art Competition, a countrywide search for young talents that counts among its past winners National Artists Jose Joya and Ang Kiukok. Open to college students, the art tilt has four categories: oil/acrylic, watercolor, sculpture and digital art.

For the first time since the Shell Art Interaction Program was established in 1994, a whole-day session was arranged to give the guest artist and students more time to exchange insights. The delegation from Manila, led by Vinluan and joined by Shell executives Justo Conde and Mylene Santos, was warmly welcomed by the faculty of PWC Davao headed by Division Chair Brenda Barba. Around 230 participants from various schools gathered at the covered courts of PWC for the event. Some Davaoeño art enthusiasts were also present.

The first half of the symposium was a CD presentation that focused on Vinluan's three decades of professional career. The young audience learned about the guest artist's "sources, influences, philosophy and techniques" to help them in their own personal development.

In the afternoon workshop, the students were divided into groups and eagerly worked on creating their own art pieces. Vinluan went around to observe and guide the participants, discussing "some techniques in art-making like layering, thin-to-thick paint composition and working with mixed media. Each participant was allowed to explore, depending on his/her preference, representational or non-representational art."

NOTED abstractionist Nestor Olarte Vinluan guided visual arts students during the afternoon workshop of the Shell Art Interaction Program held at the covered courts of the Philippine Women's College - School of Fine Arts and Culture in Davao. Vinluan observed the students and gave participants some pointers and positive comments about their works.

During his undergraduate years, Vinluan entered the Shell On-the-Spot Painting Contest and won two consecutive years. Now a towering figure in Philippine art, he encouraged young Mindanao artists to join the National Students Art Competition as an excellent opportunity to become exposed to a wider art audience.

Last year, the three-term former Dean of the University of the Philippines Diliman was well received in Cebu, Iloilo and Bacolod where he talked to enthusiastic young artists about his evolution as artist-academician, and had a dynamic discussion with them concerning Philippine art.

The Shell art season culminates in the industry-anticipated National Students Art Competition this September. Interested parties can download the entry forms at www.shell.com.ph.

Greenwich announces Digicraze promo winners

TEN lucky customers from various parts of the country received hi-tech digital gadgets and desktop computers through Greenwich's recently concluded Digicraze promo. The promo was implemented in Greenwich stores nationwide beginning June 15.

Four winners from Metro Manila, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao were picked during the grand draw ceremonies held at the Greenwich main office in Ortigas, Pasig City. The grand prize winners were Mark Ian Ricafrente of Makati City, John Paul Bituin of Pampanga, Michael Vincent Angustura of Bacolod City, and Luisa Marie Porras of Davao City. Each of them received one HP Compaq d220 PC.

Other Digicraze winners include Leah Noriega (Davao City) and Emilia Loga (Nueva Ecija), one Palm Pilot each; Jesselyn Fontiveros (Iloilo City) and Julie Palanca (Cebu City), one Canon A400 DigiCam each; Kimberly Gimena (Davao City) and Melde Borje (Taguig), one Ipod Shuffle each.

The grand draw was facilitated by Greenwich executives Cherry Caluya (marketing director), Anabelle Narciso (national operations manager), Perpy Dorego (promotions manager), Christopher Dinglasan (ad and PR manager), with the supervision of DTI representative Lourdes Ruiz.

"Digicraze is just one of the many promotions we offer to our customers. We make sure that we don't run out of fresh ideas to reward our customers through creative promotions, in the same way that we continue to create new and innovative products so they can have more to choose from," says Caluya.

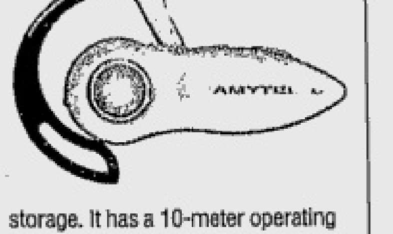
Greenwich Pizza Corporation, the no. 1 pizza and most awarded pizza chain in the country, also offers regular treats to its customers through its Ka-G Card through which customers can receive different treats every week.

DHL's supply chain forum

DHL, the world's leading express and logistics company, has announced that Dr. John Gattorna, one of the world's top logistics and supply management experts, will share his expertise and experiences at a special seminar for DHL's top clients and members of the Semiconductor and Electronics Traffic Managers Association (Setma). The event will be held at the Palms Country Club in Alabang today. Over the last 25 years, Dr. Gattorna has earned a reputation in the international supply chain management field. He is a renowned lecturer widely recognized to possess a strong conceptual capacity, combined with a pragmatic approach, to solving complex business problems. Dr. Gattorna established and led Accenture's supply chain practices in Australia, New Zealand and Southern Asia, and was one of the firm's most respected thought leaders. He also operated his own boutique consulting company for over a decade, specializing in marketing, logistics, and channels strategy, and servicing an international clientele. Dr. Gattorna has authored and co-authored ten books and numerous articles on marketing, marketing planning, pricing, customer service, channels strategy, logistics, and supply chain management. His most recent book, the Gower Handbook of Supply Chain Management, is widely acknowledged as the definitive work on supply chain management theory and practice. He teaches at Normandy Business School, Le Havre, France.

ProductFILES

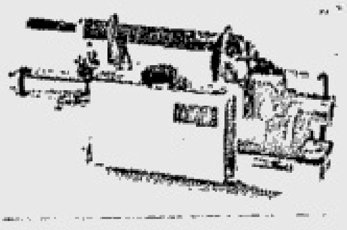
Olympia introduces Amytel Bluetooth



THE REVOLUTION in Bluetooth technology is now expanding. Olympia Philippines Inc introduces - the Amytel Bluetooth Headset. The Amytel Bluetooth Headset (ABH-204) is a must have mobile communication accessory compatible with every mobile phone for its user-friendly features and on call capabilities. Sleek and smart in its design, it gives you the experience of effortless hands-free calls via voice dialing. It is exceptionally suitable for every user-on-the-go as it comes with a necklace, belt clip and holster for easy storage. It has a 10-meter operating range from the phone and it is compatible with Bluetooth Specification Version 1.1 and up. Now, talk to anyone, anytime while on the road or at work with high quality sound and appropriate volume levels. The ABH-204 has 3 hours charging time, 5 hours talk time and standby time of 165 hours (6.5 days). For more information, call 564-1321 or 564-1332 and look for Bobby.

The new standard in indoor fogging

DENGUE fever has been recognized as a public health problem for over 200 years. Preventive fogging has helped minimize the spread of dengue around the world. However, focus has been limited to outdoor fogging, where the indoor Aedes species are not hit. To address the need for a more flexible fogging machine for indoor use, Igeba has designed a compact and lightweight model that is perfect for pest control applications in buildings, factories and home use. Only 6.6 kgs and 78 cm long, the TF-34 model allows the operator to easily maneuver inside crowded rooms, yet its powerful engine allows for faster distribution of insecticide, with an effective horizontal reach of up to 100 meters. The TF-34 model is equipped with the patented Igeba "no spark plug" technology. All parts in contact with the chemical solution is made of high quality materials like stainless steel, viton and brass. Igeba TF-34 is manufactured by Igeba Geraetebau GmbH, Germany. Also available, TF-35 Standard Fogger and the TF-95 Truck-Mounted Fogger. For free demonstrations, contact Pycor Inc at 712-1802, 732-0778 or 410-8090. Or e-mail them at sales@pycor.com.



OKF ALOE VERA JUICE PRODUCT SAMPLING

OKF Aloe Vera Juice brings to SM Super Mall shoppers the health benefits of Aloe Vera by recently conducting product sampling in SM Malls located at Bicutan; Sucat; and Marilao, Bulacan. OKF Aloe Vera Juice has a special formulation that makes the juice a true thirst quencher with no sticky aftertaste. Those who have tried this unique product can attest that a healthy beverage like OKF can also be delicious at the same time. OKF Aloe Vera Juice is available in SM Supermarkets, Mercury Drug stores, Robinsons, Ever Supermarkets, Puregold, Waltermart and other major supermarkets and groceries nationwide. For inquiries on OKF Aloe Vera Juice, call Genson Distribution Inc at 911-2981, 421-6135 or e-mail genson888@yahoo.com.

SHANGRI-LA GROUP TURNS OVER PCP#4 TO PNP

Shown during the ribbon cutting ceremony at the recently-concluded turn over of Police Community Precinct #4 along Shaw Boulevard in Mandaluyong City by the Shangri-La Group are Mandaluyong Mayor Neptali Gonzales Jr. (extreme right), PNP Deputy Director Avelino Razon Jr. (2nd from right), PNP Director Vidal Querol, PNP Chief Superintendent Oscar Valenzuela and Shangri-La chair and president Tomas C. Zita, Jr. (center). Also present were PNP Colonel Antonio Aguilar, PNP Chief Inspector Raul Sibiran, and Shangri-La Group executives, EPHI's Vince Formoso and Kinsun Ng, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel's John Rice and Shangri-La Plaza's Lala Fojas.

Bits Clips

Phinma sponsors AIM Asian conference

PHINMA highlights its leadership in corporate social responsibility by signing up as a sponsor of the Asian CSR Awards, a feature of the fourth annual Asian Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility (AFCSR), to be held in Jakarta on Sept. 8 and 9. AFCSR is an Asian Institute of Management (AIM) conference under the auspices of the AIM - Ramon V. del Rosario, Sr. Center for Corporate Responsibility (AIM-RVR Center). This year's AFCSR has the theme "Exploring CSR Strategies for Business: How the right strategy for CSR can make business more effective." The conference examines the developments in the field of CSR that are helping make business more effective. CSR strategies will be presented and discussed in the two-day forum.

Hello Kitty is back at McDonald's

SANRIO'S best-loved character Hello Kitty is back at McDonald's, with the colorful Shinkansen wind up toy trains that zoom in different directions. Kids will surely love to have not just one but all of these cute and fashionable Sanrio toys: Hello Kitty - Lipstick Pen; Hello Kitty - Nail Polish Stamper; Hello Kitty - Compact Memo Kit; Hello Kitty - Make Up Case; and the Shinkansen Trains 1,2,3, and 4. Collect all four, connect and watch the trains follow the direction of the leader. There's one in every McDonald's Happy Meal, including the Longga Burger meal for only P65. Offer good until Aug. 21 only.

Metro Appliance Festival

ALL ROADS will lead to Metro Stores as it holds the most awaited annual promo the "Metro Appliance Festival". This special affair runs until Aug. 22. Up to 50 percent discount on selected priced items such as: Pensonic DVD - P1,995; Proline Car Stereo - P399; Magnum Sub-woofer -P1,559; JVC 21" Flat Sreen TV with DVD player - P12,989 and many, many more. As an added treat, all major Equitable credit cardholders can avail of zero percent interest on selected installment plan. So shop now at Metro Stores in Cebu, Colon, Mandaue City, Ayala Center Cebu, Legazpi City, Lucena City, and Metro Market! Market! in Fort Bonifacio, Global City, Metro Manila.

New PCCI registration

THE PHILIPPINE Canine Club Inc (PCCI) recently announced the club's newly adopted registration systems. There are six options for pet owners to choose from. These include the registering with the PCCI satellite offices nationwide for proper documentation, microchip system, tattooing, examination of a breed warden, DNA testing, or bar coding. For more information call up PCCI at 412-4104, 412-4105, 721 8345, Telefax 721-7152 or email pcci@i-manila.com.ph.

谢谢您

Thank you!

For 85 Years of Making your Success our Business

This year marks China Bank's 85th Anniversary. With an enduring legacy of successful partnership with several generations of clients and businesses, the Bank celebrates its more than eight decades in the financial industry as one of the country's most trusted and respected financial institutions. From humble beginnings, the Bank has built a reputation of solid performance and strength, capped by record earnings in the last three consecutive years.

Driven by a strong commitment to customer service, China Bank continues to develop and enhance relevant, timely and customer-focused products and services.

- On its 85th milestone year, the Bank gave away a total of P6.5 million in cash and prizes for its "Grateful at 85" anniversary raffle promo.
- China Bank is also Consumers Union of the Philippines' Outstanding Commercial Bank for 2004 and the recipient of 2005 Annual National Consumers Excellence Award by Parangal ng Bayan Foundation.
- For 2005, China Bank enters the realm of electronic banking thru its **China Bank Online**, a superior and multi-functional internet and mobile banking platform.
- Following China Bank's tradition of giving back to the community it serves, the Bank is contributing P1 million to Gawad Kalinga, a non-profit initiative for housing and community development for poor families.

Thank you for 85 years of banking partnership.

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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

GOING loco over coco /C3

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS ◉ TUESDAY FITNESS ◉ WEDNESDAY 2BU ◉ THURSDAY FOOD ◉ FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

My off-and-on affair with the gym

By Chit Roces
Contributor

NOTHING feels so right as enrolling in a gym. I have done it often enough in this lifetime.

After all, every time I feel a pain, it is usually traced to lack of exercise, though lately, age has added to the problem.

Of course, it's better to actually attend sessions, but enrolling already makes me feel good.

When I was younger, the reason for going to the gym was to get back in shape, lose weight, or firm up. Now it's some form of insurance.

I have two lifetime memberships—at Joanne Drew and Slimmers' World. I have dropped the latter since nearly every member seems to be peddling something. When I'm sweating I want to be left alone.

Sweating and any activity that leads to it do not appeal to me. That rules out any kind of sport so it's the gym for me.

Inspired

After 10 years, the longest time I was away, I'm back, inspired by visions of dancing at my grandchildren's weddings (the oldest is 14, the youngest, 5). The scene is greatly changed.

I arrive in the afternoon, carrying the backpack with the gym's logo like a huge handbag. I refuse to sling it on my back and look like a hitchhiker.

I probably look like a lumpy sausage stuffed into a broad-striped red-and-orange body-hugger and lavender tights, the Jane Fonda look of the Barbella '80s. No one may be able to place me in time, but I definitely feel and probably look alien.

> After 10 years, I'm back in a gym, inspired by visions of dancing at my grandchildren's weddings

The others are wearing loose outfits of dark blue or gray, something out of the China of the '70s, making them, to my consolation, look like they are from an even earlier era.

I decide to wear a similar attire the next day but promptly realize I can come as I please since no one seems to notice anyone else, anyway.

Just as well. Without makeup and girdle, hair wet as you huff and puff and sweat, you would rather be incognito, even to yourself, something not easy to manage when you're facing a wall of mirrors. The most appealing diversion is a television movie showing in a row of screens in front of you and heard in your earphones.

Secure

I have a personal trainer for the first few days to teach me how to work the equipment, the proper postures and breathing techniques. You feel secure having a trainer, someone to make sure you're doing everything right all the time.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRA-

It also costs money so I go on my own as soon as I can, and manage to finish two weeks. The movie, I am pleased to discover, makes exercise less of a drudgery. But it can also make you forget the time, which defeats the very purpose of exercise—health.

At the end of the second week, I have a dead toenail from biking through two movies. A personal trainer, I am told, would have saved me from the tragedy, but I think it's the shoes. I remember scrimping on them, too, using my sister's, a size smaller, and possibly good only for one movie.

The toenail does not revive until after six months. As soon as it does, it goes into a proper Nike shoe (at P3,800 a pair, the most expensive I have owned) and I'm back in the gym. I also decide to get a personal trainer.

The investment is only beginning to pay off—my size, for instance, shrinking from extra large to decent large— when I have to take a scheduled trip to the States, which means another two months away from the gym. The break is extended by two more months because of the Christmas season.

Goodbyes

I contact my trainer again but I am unable to keep her for long. She receives her long-awaited immigrant visa for Canada midway of our program. She thanks me and says goodbye. I say goodbye to the gym again.

After a while I return, determined to be re-inspired. I wander into an area I haven't been in before, following the sound of lively music. An entire wall is covered with mirrors. A group of about 30 young men and women in four rows is dancing to a hot Latin number, led by a highly charged gay instructor in a clingy yellow shirt and an even tighter pair of pants, yelling instructions, counting the beat and admiring his own image in the mirror. This seems perfect for both my near- and long-term plans.

I quickly sign up but it doesn't take long before I realize I'm out of my league—the pace, the Broadway leaps, the contortions. My body dances to the beat of another drummer, who plays only for the person the instructor calls *tita*.

The gym can be a strange and inhospitable place for a non-athletic senior like me, but I know—indeed feel—I have to be there. I realize, though, I need to do more if I really want to dance at my grandchildren's weddings.

How Mars and Venus get fit

Part Two

WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

DR. PAMELA Peeke was not the only scientist at the 2005 Idea World Fitness Convention to talk about the differences in how men and women get fit. One of my favorite lecturers, Dr. Len Kravitz also discussed the subject in his presentation, "The Female Fitness Training Advantage."

The body has about 50 trillion cells but only the reproductive cells are different in men and women. The size of an organ, like the heart or liver, is related to the size of the body and not gender. Kravitz says, in a laboratory, you cannot distinguish if an organ belongs to a man or woman.

The hormones of the reproductive system account for differences between sexes like height and weight.

The average woman generally has eight to 10 percent more fat than a man. Some five percent of a woman's body fat is sex specific, meaning it is reserved for the demands of pregnancy and breastfeeding and is found primarily in the thighs, buttocks and breasts.

The body fat percentage of elite male and female athletes can vary by only two to six percent.

Distribution

Reproductive hormones also seem to control how fat is distributed. In men, fat is typically stored in the abdomen and upper body while a typical woman stores fat in the lower abdomen, hips, buttocks and thighs.

Not everyone follows this stereotypical fat distribution pattern. Some women store fat in the waist and abdomen and some men have heavier lower bodies. But again hormones seem to be responsible.

Evidence suggests women who store fat like a man have more androgens (male sex hormones) than the average female. Women with much smaller waists compared to their hips have higher levels of estrogen.

Studies show it is easier for men to lose fat in the abdominal area while women have a harder time losing fat in the lower body, including the lower abdomen. Fat cells have two types of receptors—alpha and beta. Alpha-receptors inhibit lipolysis or the breakdown of fat. Women have more alpha-receptors in the hip and thigh regions. Beta-receptors stimulate fat breakdown. Men have more beta-receptors in the abdominal region.

Lipoprotein lipase (LPL) is an enzyme involved in fat storage. Women have 3-5 times more LPL in the lower body compared to the upper body.

Hormone-sensitive lipase (HSL) is an enzyme involved in fat breakdown. In females, HSL is very slow in releasing fat from the hips and thighs.

Face first

This may explain why women tend to lose fat first in the face and chin, then in the abdomen, and finally in the hips and thighs. Some experts say a woman's thighs will usually slim down when their body fat percentage goes down to about 18 percent.

> Studies show it is easier for men to lose fat in the abdominal area while women have a harder time losing fat in the lower body

The good news is that women burn more fat than men during low to moderate intensity aerobic exercise. This gives women an advantage in endurance sports like long distance cycling and running.

Females also have an advantage in swimming because their higher body fat aids in buoyancy. So women have less drag and expend 20 percent less energy compared to men at the same pace and distance.

Men have 10-30 times more testosterone than women. Testosterone is the most potent anabolic hormone. Anabolic means "muscle building." This explains why men have bigger muscles than women. Muscles make up some 38 percent of a man's total weight and 31 percent of a woman's.

Testosterone helps men build big muscles through weight training. Most women cannot build muscles and also have to work much harder to look "cut and defined" because they have more subcutaneous fat that covers up their muscles. Women who easily become "muscular" most likely have higher androgen levels than the average female.

Women, in general, are three to four inches shorter and 25-30 pounds lighter than men. They are shorter because they stop growing two to three years before men.

Growth period

Estrogen hastens the closing of growth plates in long bones (arms and legs), thus a female has a shorter growth period. Girls usually stop growing by 18 years while boys grow till they are 21.

So men are usually taller and have wider shoulders, more muscle mass and less fat. Women are usually shorter and have wider hips and more subcutaneous fat.

Men also have more massive and dense bones than women. They have larger joints. But nature has given women larger knee joints to support wider hips. Unfortunately, wide hips also make female knees more predisposed to problems in running, jumping and hopping.

For women with wider hips, Kravitz says squats should be shoulder width or wider. Stationary or step-back lunges are less stressful than step-forward lunges. Cardio activities should be low-impact.

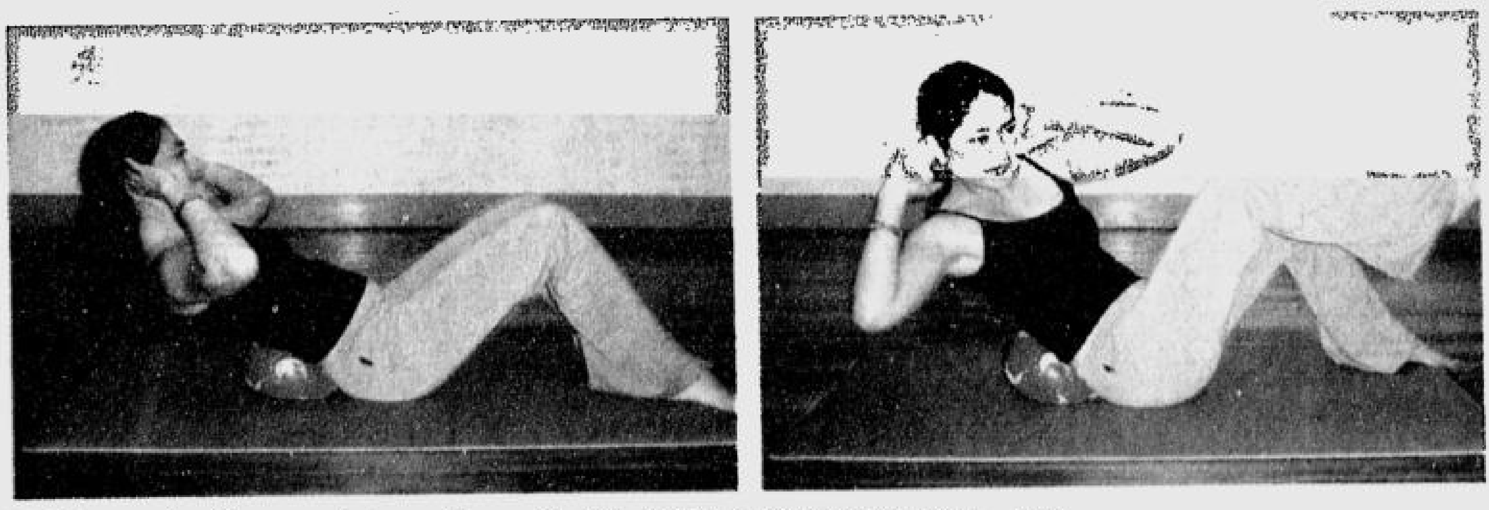
Women tend to have a greater curvature in the lumbar or lower back area, making them more prone to chronic lower back pain. So "core" exercises that teach how to stabilize the torso when arms and legs are in motion are a must in a woman's exercise program, according to Kravitz.

Next week: Exercise and appetite, how they vary according to gender

Visit www.tinajuanftness.info.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Criss-cross crunch on mini ball



THIS exercise firms and strengthens the abdominal muscles, particularly the oblique muscles that criss-cross the waist.

Equipment

Exercise mat and small rubber ball

Exercise technique

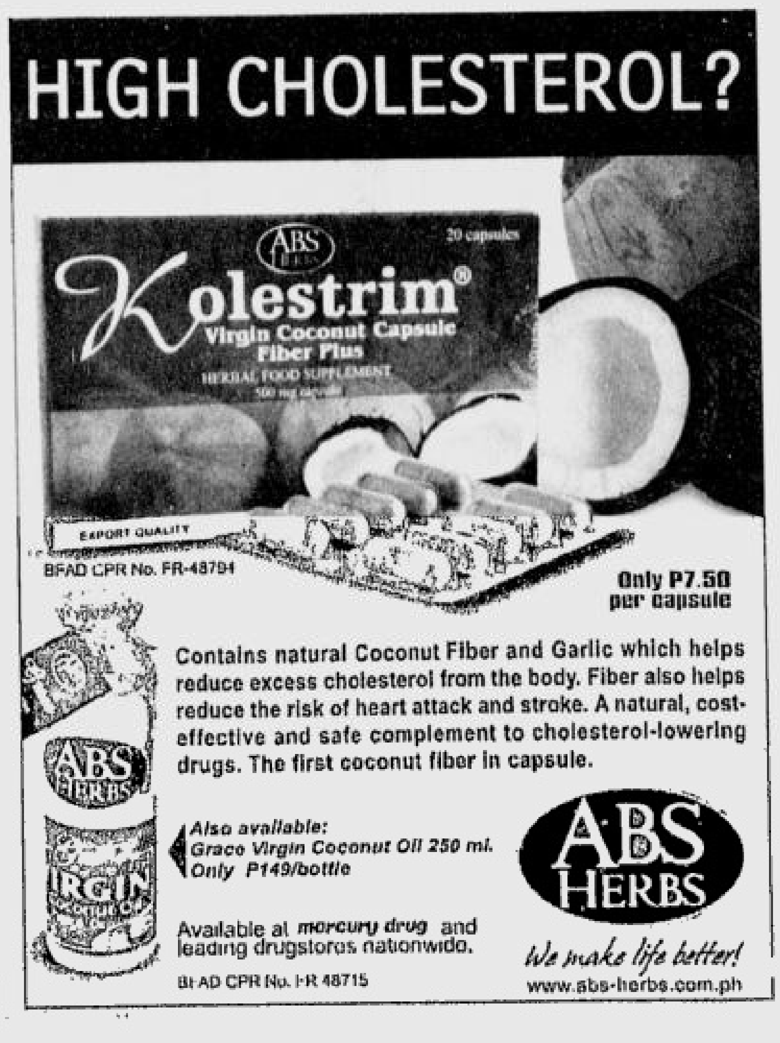
1. Place the mini ball behind your lower back.
2. Legs should be hip-distance apart. Place both hands behind your head. This is your starting position.
3. Diagonally curl your torso and simultaneously lift the opposite knee.
4. Slowly return to the starting position and do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips

1. Exhale as you curl; inhale on the return.
2. Support your head lightly with your fingertips to avoid pulling on your neck.
3. Stabilize your hips on the mat. Do not allow your hips to lift up as you curl diagonally. Rotate from the waist.

Repetitions

10 repetitions per side



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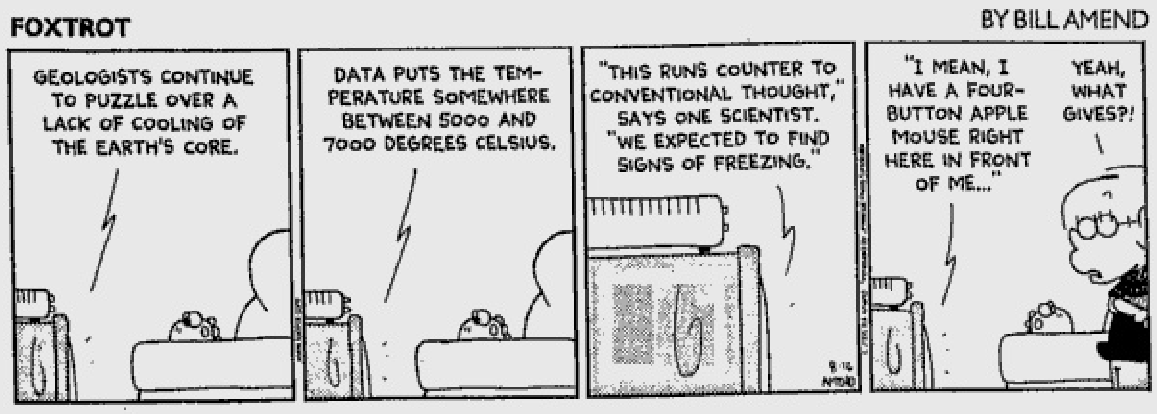
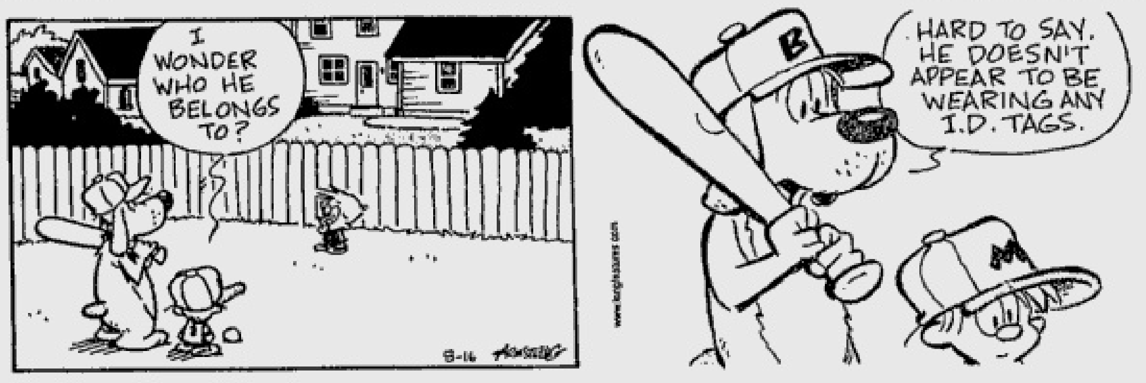
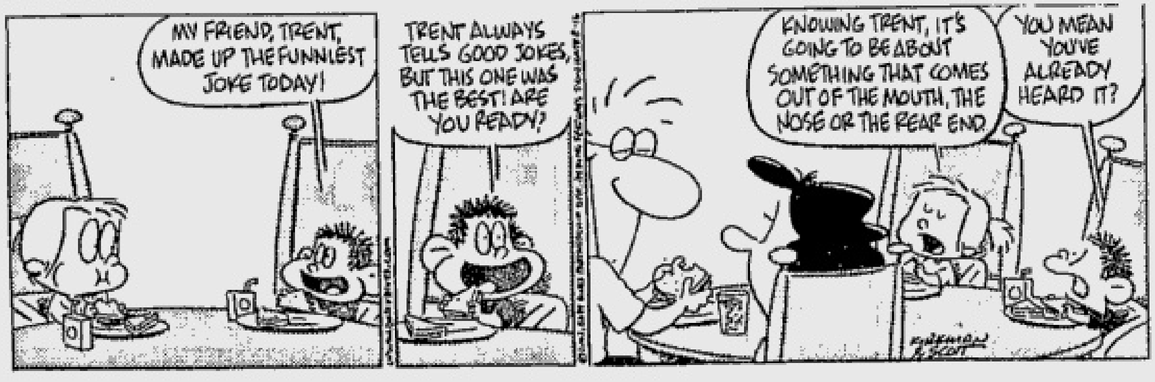

GEOLOGISTS CONTINUE TO PUZZLE OVER A LACK OF COOLING OF THE EARTH'S CORE.
DATA PUTS THE TEMPERATURE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 5000 AND 7000 DEGREES CELSIUS.
"THIS RUNS COUNTER TO CONVENTIONAL THOUGHT," SAYS ONE SCIENTIST. "WE EXPECTED TO FIND SIGNS OF FREEZING."
"I MEAN, I HAVE A FOUR-BUTTON APPLE MOUSE RIGHT HERE IN FRONT OF ME..."
YEAH, WHAT GIVES?!
8-16

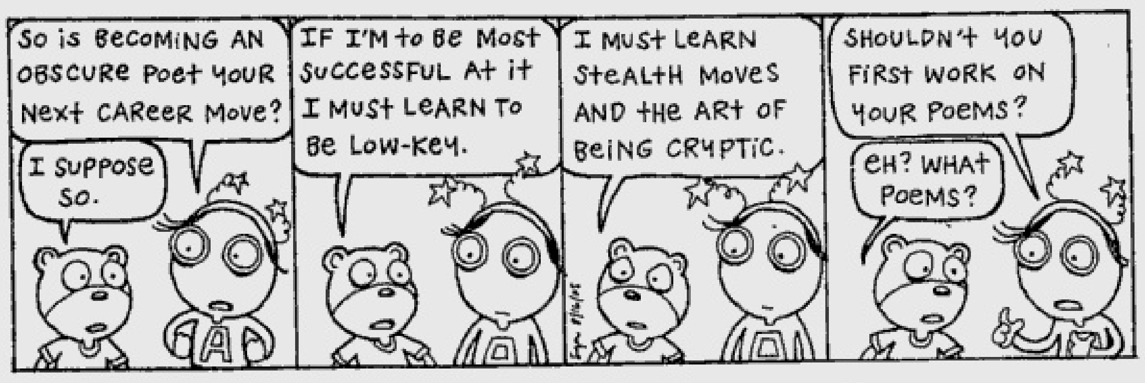
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I WONDER WHO HE BELONGS TO?
HARD TO SAY. HE DOESN'T APPEAR TO BE WEARING ANY I.D. TAGS.
8-16

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


MY FRIEND, TRENT, MADE UP THE FUNNIEST JOKE TODAY!
TRENT ALWAYS TELLS GOOD JOKES, BUT THIS ONE WAS THE BEST! ARE YOU READY?
KNOWING TRENT, IT'S GOING TO BE ABOUT SOMETHING THAT COMES OUT OF THE MOUTH, THE NOSE OR THE REAR END.
YOU MEAN YOU'VE ALREADY HEARD IT?

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


So is becoming an obscure poet your next career move?
I suppose so.
If I'm to be most successful at it I must learn to be low-key.
I must learn stealth moves and the art of being cryptic.
Shouldn't you first work on your poems?
Eh? What poems?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're highly entertaining. You love to host special occasions. You're intelligent, and you're an excellent communicator. You're also fun-loving and very generous. You want it all! You do need harmony in your closest relationships, however. You don't like static! Work hard in the year ahead for rewards in 2006-07.
Birthdate of: Angela Bassett, actress; Madonna, entertainer; Emily Robinson, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your ability to relate to others improves enormously in the next two months. Today Venus moves opposite your sign, paving the way for new relationships as well.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Everything related to your job and your work scene will improve in the next month. Congenial relations with co-workers are possible now. You might even earn more money.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today you enter a lovely, fun-filled, romantic month—maybe longer. Mostly, you just want to do what you want to do. You want to be as carefree as a kid again.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Get serious about your ideas to make where you live look more attractive. All family relations are warmer and easier to maintain during the next six weeks.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your social skills look hot! Expect success in selling, marketing, writing, teaching, speaking and communicating in any manner. (You might think of new ways to make money.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It will be easier to attract money to you in the next few weeks. Not only do financial opportunities come your way now, but opportunities to spend your money extravagantly are also here! Oops—one cancels out the other.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): In the next few weeks, make peace with others wherever there is dissension or argument. You have a strong desire to relate to others now. This is a good month to enjoy the company of friends.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might have a need or an opportunity to care for someone in the next six weeks. You will do this willingly. Self-denial comes easily to you now.

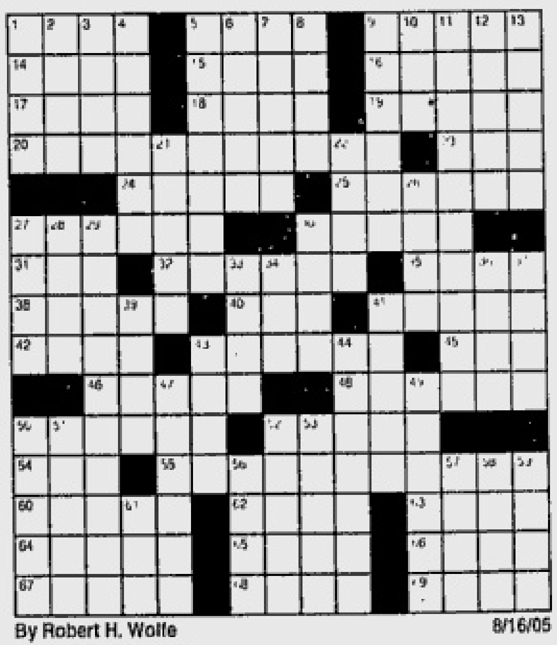
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): The next two months are one of the loveliest cycles you can have for group activities and fun times with friends. All your relationships become friendlier.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your professional life looks great. People work well with you now. You might have to make artistic contributions to redecorating, design or layout work.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Someone from another culture might broaden your mind through travel, instruction or introducing you to new things and new ways of thinking. (It's an easy pitfall to assume everyone thinks as we do.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Love relationships are more intimate and tender now. Money and goodies might flow freely to your partner now.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY
8/16/05

ACROSS
1 Big name in Norway
5 Disney frames
9 French clerics
14 Skin hole
15 Soothing plant
16 Seaside
17 Road fee
18 Roof material
19 __ blanche
20 Ranch owner?
23 Born
24 Wild melees
25 Tussled
27 Duelist's attendant
30 Silvery fish
31 Publishing grp.
32 Kind of drum
35 Ages and ages
38 Squeeze past
40 Eggs
41 Computer acronym
42 Poker stake
43 Material sample
45 Fr. woman's title
46 Admit
48 Tenant
50 Like some fruits
52 Burning
54 Varnish ingredient
55 Ranch grassland seeker?
60 Pocatello's state
62 Links' vehicle
63 Garr of "Tootsie"
64 "Dallas" Miss
65 River of Florence
66 Genuine
67 Tennis star Monica
68 Org.
69 Comic Johnson

DOWN
1 Chooses
2 Spoils taken
3 Woody Guthrie's son
4 Trademark fastener
5 Part of CRT
6 T.S. or George
7 Droops laxly
8 Burpee kernel
9 Build up
10 Scarf like a snake?
11 Ranch commotions?
12 First name in cosmetics
13 Mrs. Peel's partner
21 Strikingly unconventional
22 One-named model
26 Winter ride
27 Adventure story
28 Scrooge, to friends
29 Ranch sound?
30 Bed support
33 Mini-city
34 Dam-building grp.
36 Seward Peninsula town
37 Hook's aide
39 Some buzzers
41 Oteri of "SNL"
43 Forage crop
44 Fadiman or Webb
47 Uncomfortable spasms
49 Nissan model
50 Takes to the air
51 Dipper
52 Culture media
53 Flowerless plants
56 Final Four org.
57 Stag, doe and fawn
58 Q.E.D. word
59 Work up
61 Hurry!

Monday's Puzzle Solved

M	A	A	M	■	H	O	R	S	T	■	S	W	A	B
O	G	L	E	■	E	M	I	L	E	■	T	E	R	R
W	H	I	T	E	W	A	T	E	R	■	E	L	I	A
S	A	T	E	D	■	R	E	D	M	A	P	L	E	S
■	■	■	O	S	S	■	■	S	E	R	O	W	■	■
L	A	W	R	E	N	C	E	■	D	A	N	I	S	H
E	G	O	■	L	O	C	A	L	■	L	I	S	L	E
G	O	O	D	■	W	I	R	E	D	■	T	H	A	N
A	R	D	O	R	■	I	N	C	U	R	■	E	T	C
L	A	W	S	O	N	■	S	H	O	E	T	R	E	E
■	■	O	S	M	I	C	■	■	■	S	S	E	■	■
S	C	R	I	P	T	U	R	E	■	O	N	S	E	T
L	A	K	E	■	W	R	I	S	T	W	A	T	C	H
A	P	E	R	■	I	V	A	N	A	■	N	O	R	A
T	O	R	S	■	T	E	L	E	X	■	T	A	U	T

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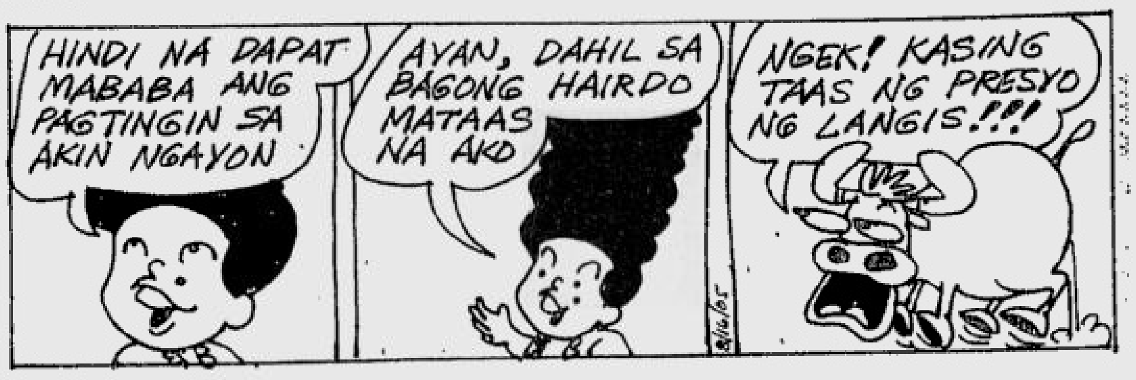
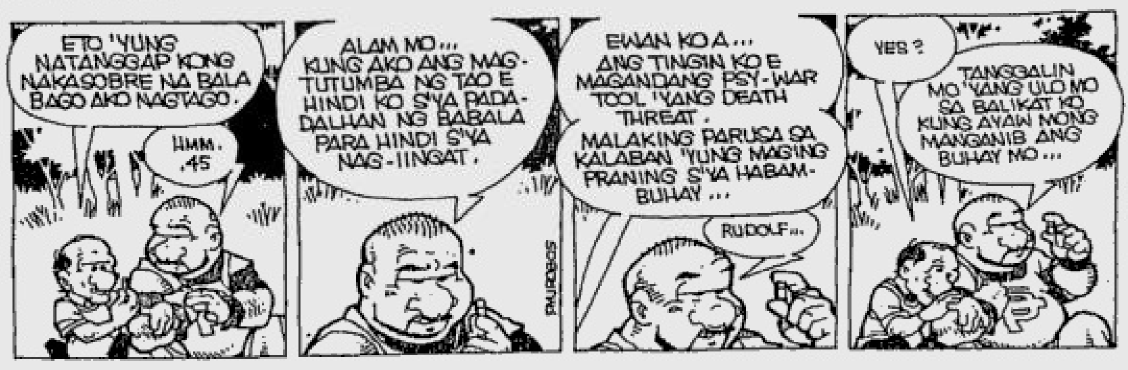
8/16/05

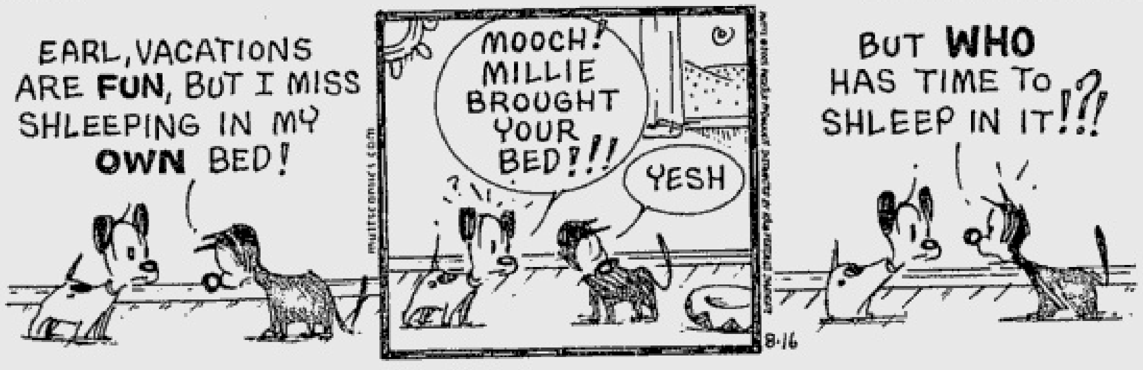
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


HINDI NA DAPAT MABABA ANG PAGTINGIN SA AKIN NGAYON
AYAN, DAHIL SA BAGONG HAIRDO MATAAS NA AKO
NGEK! KASING TAAS NG PRESYO NG LANGIS!?!
8/16/05

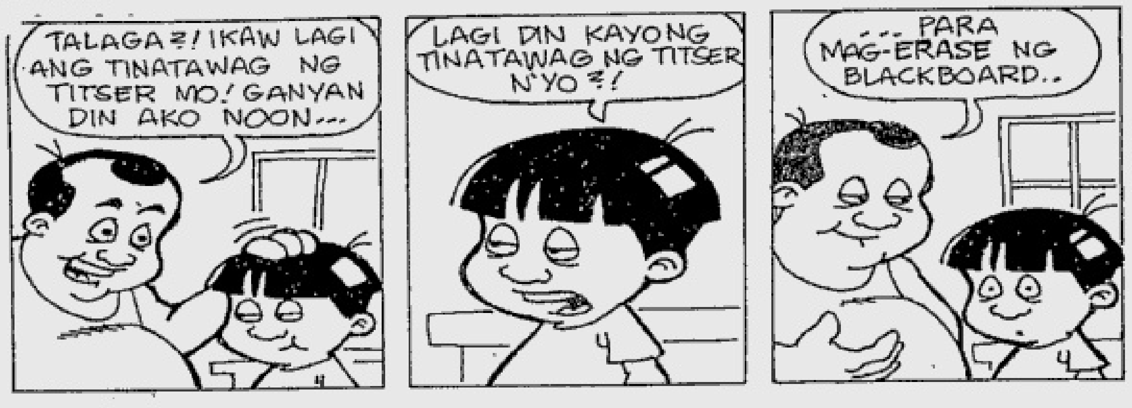
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


ETO 'YUNG NATANGGAP KONG NAKASOBRE NA BALA BAGO AKO NAGTAGO.
HMM. .45
ALAM MO... KUNG AKO ANG MAG-TUTUMBA NG TAO E HINDI KO S'YA PADA-DALHAN NG BABALA PARA HINDI S'YA NAG-IINGAT.
EWAN KO A... ANG TINGIN KO E MAGANDANG PSY-WAR TOOL 'YANG DEATH THREAT. MALAKING PARUSA SA KALABAN 'YUNG MAGING PRANING S'YA HABAM-BUHAY...
RUDOLF...
YES?
TANGGALIN MO 'YANG ULO MO SA BALIKAT KO KUNG AYAW MONG MANGANIB ANG BUHAY MO...

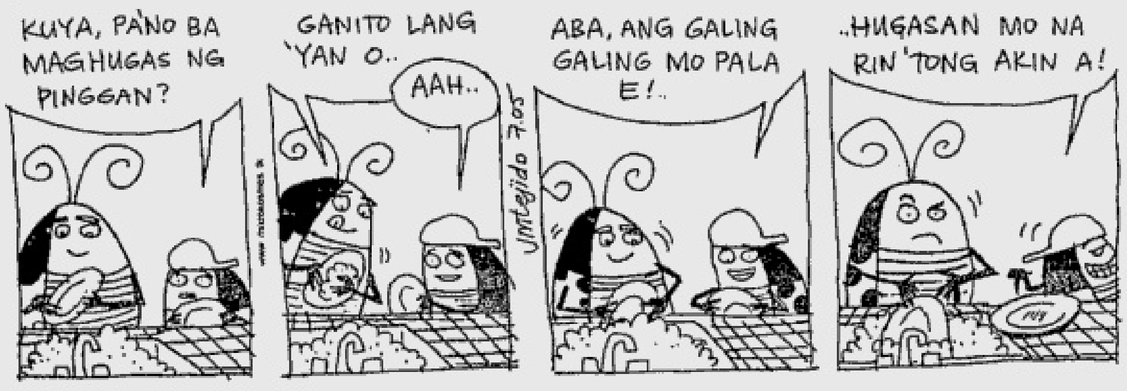
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


EARL, VACATIONS ARE FUN, BUT I MISS SHLEEPING IN MY OWN BED!
MOOCH! MILLIE BROUGHT YOUR BED?!!
YESH
BUT WHO HAS TIME TO SHLEEP IN IT!?!
muttscomics.com
8-16

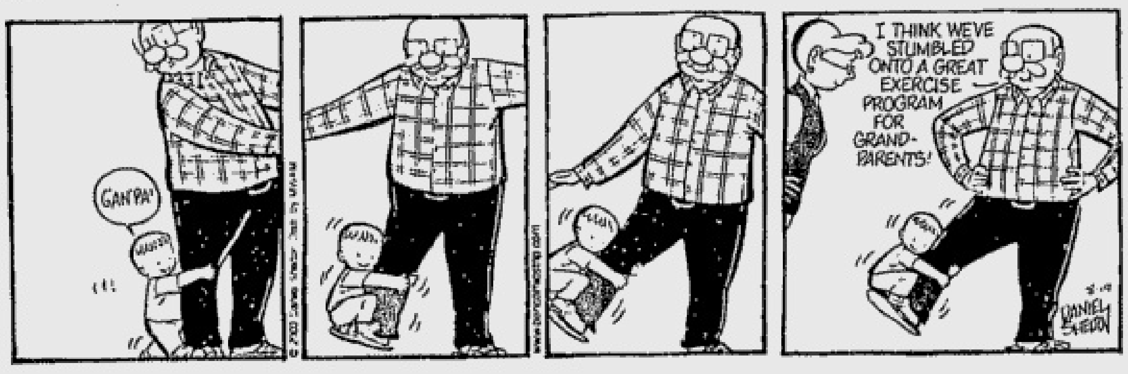
KAMOTE BY RICKY BARBOZA


TALAGA?! IKAW LAGI ANG TINATAWAG NG TITSER MO! GANYAN DIN AKO NOON...
LAGI DIN KAYONG TINATAWAG NG TITSER N'YO?!
...PARA MAG-ERASE NG BLACKBOARD..

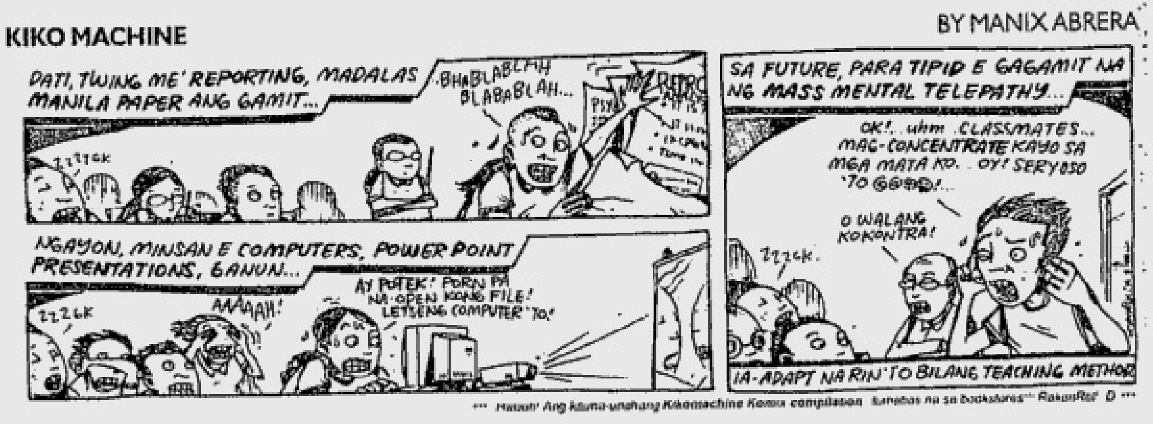
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KUYA, PA'NO BA MAGHUGAS NG PINGGAN?
GANITO LANG 'YAN O..
AAH..
ABA, ANG GALING GALING MO PALA E!..
..HUGASAN MO NA RIN 'TONG AKIN A!
Jmtejido 7.05

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

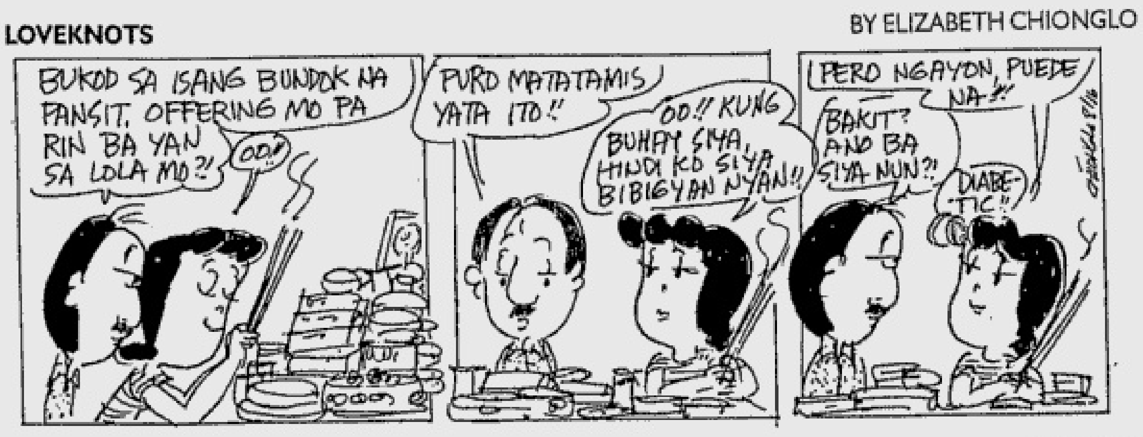

GAN'PA!
I THINK WE'VE STUMBLED ONTO A GREAT EXERCISE PROGRAM FOR GRAND-PARENTS!
DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

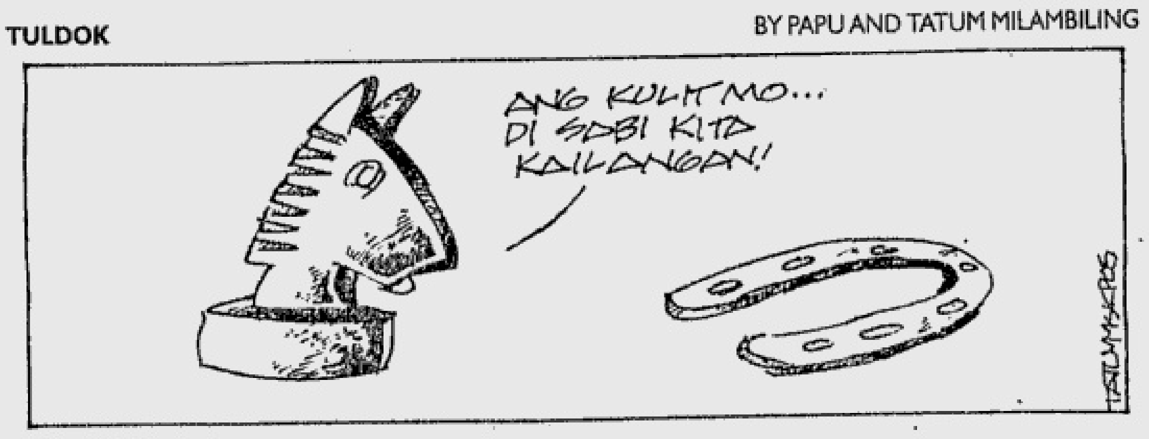

DATI, TWING ME' REPORTING, MADALAS MANILA PAPER ANG GAMIT...
BHABLABLAH BLABABLAH...
ZZZGK
NGAYON, MINSAN E COMPUTERS, POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS, GANUN...
AAAAAH!
AY POTEK! PORN PA NA-OPEN KONG FILE! LETSENG COMPUTER 'TO!
ZZZGK
SA FUTURE, PARA TIPID E GAGAMIT NA NG MASS MENTAL TELEPATHY...
OK!.. uhm ..CLASSMATES... MAG-CONCENTRATE KAYO SA MGA MATA KO.. OY! SERYOSO 'TO @#$%!..
O WALANG KOKONTRA!
ZZZGK.
IA-ADAPT NA RIN 'TO BILANG TEACHING METHOD

*** Hataw! Ang kauna-unahang Kikomachine Komix compilation lumabas na sa bookstores!** RakenRol! :D ***

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


BUKOD SA ISANG BUNDOK NA PANSIT, OFFERING MO PA RIN BA YAN SA LOLA MO?!
OO!
PURO MATATAMIS YATA ITO!!
OO!! KUNG BUHAY SIYA, HINDI KO SIYA BIBIGYAN NYAN!!
PERO NGAYON, PUEDE NA?!
BAKIT? ANO BA SIYA NUN?!
DIABE-TIC!!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANG KULIT MO... DI SABI KITA KAILANGAN!
TATUM 8.8.05

Nuts about coconut

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

PROBABLY no tree on earth can rival the coconut in terms of usefulness.

The coconut has over 65 practical uses—for handicrafts, food, medicine, décor, personal care, fuel (including coco diesel), etc. Better known are copra from its meat, netting from its husk to control soil erosion and charcoal from its shell.

Now sweeping the Philippines, and hopefully the world, is virgin coconut oil.

Perfect for health, beauty

In her latest book, "Rx: Coconuts—The Perfect Health Nut", Dr. Vernen Verallo-Rowell explains why she is passionate about the coconut.

Weight loss. Regular intake of coconut oil may help you lose weight. Coconut oil is a saturated fat, a medium chain fatty acid (there are three kinds of fatty acids from food—short-, medium- and long-chained). It produces less calories than any other oil. And they are used up as energy and not stored as fat. Consuming the oil gives one a feeling of fullness.

Heart-friendly. Coconut is a saturated oil from a plant and is cholesterol-free. People who eat coconut regularly reportedly have healthy hearts. The Demographic Yearbook of the United Nations reveals that death from heart disease in Sri Lanka, a country with a high consumption of coconut oil, was only one in 1978.

In the Bicol region, a coconut-consuming area, cholesterol levels were high among its population though still within acceptable norms. What was significant, however, was that, among all Filipinos, Bicolanos had the lowest number of deaths from strokes and heart disease (study in 1984 by Dr. Rudolf Florentino and Dr. Aguinaldo).

Helps in cancer prevention. In 1978, a review done by Sy Liangco-Lim of cancer research studies over 40 years showed that "coconut oil is cancer-innocent." Diets high in polyunsaturated fats can increase the risk of cancer.

Coco oil is considered safe as the medium-chain fatty acids it contains have been shown to prevent cancer. The oil creates healthier cell membranes that keep the cell healthy.

Fights infection. Ayurveda, a 5,000-year-old natural medicine from India uses coconut oil/products as antiseptic, astringent, gargle for sores, gum strengthener, balm for ear aches/stomach aches, syphilis, gonorrhea, smallpox, leprosy, intestinal parasites, ringworm, skin ulcers, etc.

Jon J. Kabara, a chemist with a Ph.D in pharmacology, has made extensive studies on fats and oils. He discovered the antiseptic action of the coconut. Lauric acid and monolaurin in coconut stopped the growth of bacteria, making it a natural antibiotic.

Dr. Conrado Dayrit, emeritus professor in pharmacology, together with Dr. Tayag of San Lazaro Hospital, used Dr. Kabara's patented Lauricidin, 95-percent pure monolaurin from coconut lauric acid, on patients with AIDS-causing human immunodeficiency virus. Majority registered significant reduction in viral counts.

Treats acne. Studies indicate monolaurin gel may be a safe and effective skin treatment for acne because of its anti-bacterial effect.

Perfect moisturizer. Coconut oil may also be a very effective moisturizer and hair and scalp treatment. Its fatty acids are naturally healthy and can be used to moisturize, cleanse and protect the skin.

Anti-aging. Coconut water has plant hormones considered biologically active such as kinetin that may have anti-aging properties. New research may further uncover the coconut's various properties.

Your to-do list

- **Act now.** Go get your bottle of virgin coco oil (VCO).
- Drink two to four tablespoons daily (mixed with or without food/drink) as health booster.
- Apply the oil as a moisturizer and/or makeup remover.
- Snack on fresh coconut. Drink its water for better health.

KKK crusade

Know more about the coconut. The Philippine Coconut Authority (tel. 9277029 and 9284501) marks Coco Week, Aug. 25-28, at Megatrade Hall, SM Megamall. Open to the public, it aims to re-instill among Filipinos respect for the coconut.

Its theme, "Niyog: Kayamanan, Kalusugan, Kagandahan," aims to make the coconut an indispensable part of our lives once again.

To me, it already is. Simplistic as it may seem, we are able to use every part of the coconut. Its price could go up to P50 each. The Philippines being the second largest coconut producer in the world (next to Indonesia) produces 15 billion coconuts, that means about P750 billion for the country.

Join me in this movement to promote the tree of life.

Love and light!

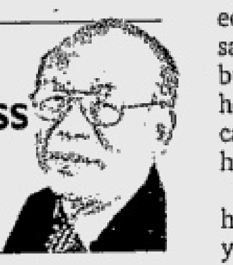
Email coryquirino_fy"yahoo.com

Calorie comparison: virgin coconut and other dietary oils

	Size	Calories	Calories From Fat
Coconut	1 cup (218g)	1,897	1,897
Olive	1 cup	1,909	1,909
Canola	1 cup	1,927	1,927
Soy Bean (salad or dressing)	1 cup	1,927	1,927
Corn	1 cup	1,927	1,927
Safflower	1 cup	1,927	1,927
Fish Salmon	1 cup	1,966	1,962

INQGRAPH BY STEPH BRAVO

Raul's brush with the paranormal



INNER AWARENESS
Jaime T. Licauco

ON THE MORNING of Friday, Aug. 5, I received a message that my school friend Raul S. Roco had died.

Although it did not come as a surprise, I still didn't believe it until I turned on my television set and confirmed the sad news. I was not surprised because a faith healer diagnosed him with prostate cancer a year ago.

Unknown to many, Raul and I were quite close during our college years in the '60s in San Beda. We spent sleepless nights working on the official school publication, The Bedan, at the National Printing Co. on Quezon Boulevard, together with Renito Saguisag (that's Rene's first name), Alfonso Aguirre, Alejo Villanueva Jr. and Pablo Trillana III.

To keep us awake, we would tell jokes. Sonny Aguirre was the champion in toilet and sick jokes and Rene would shoot down anything that's not funny. He was as acerbic then (i.e. harsh and sharp, especially in speech and manner), as he is today.

Never vulgar

Raul's jokes were never vulgar and never at the expense of another person. I remember one of his favorites:

"A man enters a bar and orders a beer. The bartender notices the man has a carrot tucked on one ear. The man drinks the beer and after paying, leaves the bar.

"The next day, the same man again enters the bar, orders a beer, pays and leaves. The bartender notices that again he has a carrot on one ear. He is dying of curiosity but is too shy or embarrassed to ask.

"The bartender resolves that the next time the man comes around, he will definitely ask him [about the] carrot.

"The next day, the man comes again, but this time he has a banana on his ear. The bartender, unable to contain his curiosity, finally asks, 'Excuse me, sir, but why do you have a banana on your ear?'

"The man looks at the bartender and replies, 'Because I can't find no carrot!'"

Praises have already been heaped on Raul and his accomplishments and I cannot add anything more.

But let me relate one or two little known personal stories about him. In the early '80s, a prominent and wealthy businessman falsely accused me of infringing on a copyrighted documentary film material he claimed he owned. He filed a lawsuit against me.

I asked Raul Roco, who was then with the ACCRA Law Office, to defend me. The businessman knew Raul and tried to persuade him not to take the case. Raul replied, "I cannot refuse the case because Jimmy is an old friend since college days."

High-powered defense

The lawyers who defended me included Raul, Franklin Drilon and Avelino Cruz. We filed a countersuit against the businessman who, when he saw my defense panel, sued for peace. Suit and countersuit were simultaneously withdrawn. The businessman and I became friends after that.

Raul also had some brush with the paranormal and the strange. Let me relate the story used in my book, "Beyond Ordinary Reality" (Vol. 2), for which he wrote the foreword:

I was in the house of Sen. Raul S. Roco in La Vista, QC, one evening. While showing me the yard, he pointed to some plants in one corner and said, "Jimmy you may not believe this, but these plants are not supposed to be here. Nobody planted them and they can be found in Bicol. No one knows how they got here."

Raul is from Naga City. He told me he always wanted to have ylang-ylang brought from Bicol to his house in Quezon City but never got around to doing it. One time, he did manage to have one plant brought from Bicol. Shortly afterwards he saw ylang-ylang growing all over the place without anyone planting them.

He also told me that, one time, he wanted some chili plants in his yard. Soon afterwards, he saw them growing without anybody planting them.

> When he wanted chilis in his yard, they started growing without anybody planting them

Bird from Bicol

A rational explanation for this seemingly strange occurrence might be that a bird carried the seeds from Bicol to Quezon City. But why did the bird drop the seeds on Raul's yard and not someone else's?

Later, when Raul visited an agricultural lot he owned in Antipolo, he noticed there were no *aratiles* trees. He asked the gardener to plant some but they did not survive. He continued to wish for the trees there. The next time he visited, there were so many *aratiles* trees growing. The gardener said they just suddenly sprouted.

When I went to Raul's wake, I couldn't go near his coffin. I could feel his presence. When I approached Sonia to greet her, I strongly felt him standing to her right. I had to rush out of the chapel for some fresh air, or I would have gone into a trance.

I thought Raul was still earthbound. I was wrong. He only wanted to greet me and express his gratitude for being at his wake. He wanted to bid farewell to a fellow Bedan and *kumpadre* that he usually saw only during special occasions after college.

I can just imagine Raul making the spirits in heaven laugh at his jokes!

Address letters to this column to Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati City. Call 8107245 or 8926806 for information on seminars I conduct. E-mail jtlicauco@tri-isys.com or innerawareness_2005@yahoo.com; visit http://www.jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program 7:30-8:30 p.m. every Sunday.

CHILDREN from various areas in Metro Manila are vaccinated against three common childhood diseases through Oplan Proteksyon, an immunization program by the Philippine Pediatric Society and New Zealand Milk Philippines.

Free vaccination for Metro kids

THE PHILIPPINE Pediatric Society (PPS), in collaboration with New Zealand Milk Philippines, launched a program to immunize children against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR).

Through Oplan Proteksyon, free MMR vaccinations were offered to children aged 1-3 in various areas in Metro Manila.

The program was launched at Damayan Community Center in Malabon with volunteer doctors from the Manila Central University's Department of Pediatrics vaccinating 120 children.

Oplan Proteksyon vaccinations were also given at the Philippine Pediatric Society Building in Bago Bantay, Quezon City; Asilo de San Vicente de Paul, United Nations Avenue, Manila; and Barrio Ugong Health Center, Pasig City.

The program aimed to help improve the health of children, not only through immunization, but also through the education of parents on proper nutrition to protect young children from common childhood diseases. Lectures on proper nutrition practices, including the importance of giving children fortified milk to help protect them from common childhood diseases, were given.

Oplan Proteksyon was organized by the PPS as part of a continuing medical grant from New Zealand Milk Philippines.

SAY GOODBYE TO PIMPLES NOW!
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Pill makes skin clearer

THE ORAL contraceptive pill may provide the solution to the problem of acne that does not respond to other treatments.

Acne, an inflammatory problem of the skin, does not only affect adolescents but older women, too. A study published in the Journal Academy of Dermatology found that 54 percent of women aged 25-58 suffered from some form of acne. The prevalence of the problem did not decrease substantially until after age 44.

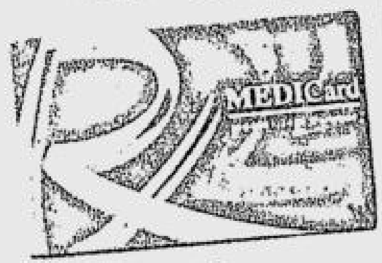
Management for acne usually involves cleansers and astringents or prescription medications like antibiotics and retinoids. But for people who do not respond or are resistant to these treatments, hormonal therapy may be the alternative. Hormonal therapy for acne includes oral contraceptives.

Acne is basically a manifestation of increased levels of androgens, a major hormone in males but present in small amounts in women. A combination pill containing both estrogen (ethinylestradiol) and progestogen (desogestrel) has been proven to be effective in treating some cases of mild to moderate acne.

A study by Vartiainen, et. al., showed that the unique combiphasic pill reduced the number and severity of acne lesions over six cycles. The pill provides two different doses of hormones in one cycle, which closely resembles a woman's normal menstrual cycle.

Obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. Sylvia Santos said, with the combiphasic pill, women get another non-contraceptive health benefit. They can avoid an unplanned pregnancy and also have clear skin.

Call 8177638, or e-mail gracial@organon.ph



MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

What is primary complex in children?

Primary Complex is a term that has traditionally described the first infection with TB bacilli – an inflammatory response that develops at the site of infection (usually the lungs) with the accompanying lymph node enlargement, which is typically seen in Primary (childhood) Tuberculosis. Primary Tuberculosis is primarily airborne infection. It is transmitted from person to person, generally from adult to child and not vice versa nor from child to child through coughing, sneezing or talking. Overcrowding and malnutrition are important extrinsic factors that favor a high incidence of this disease. Most common clinical symptoms and signs are cough, fever, enlarged lymph nodes in the neck area with loss of weight and appetite. Management of primary tuberculosis is geared towards proper nutrition, prevention and treatment of infection, removal or treatment of the source of infection and improvement in environment and home conditions. In children, measures to control tuberculosis includes BCG vaccination, detection of infectious cases to prevent spread of the disease and to adequately treat those persons exposed to an infectious TB case.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our three-year medical service provider based at MEDICard's Head Office in Makati and MEDICard Clinic in SM City North EDSA, Dr. Mevellyn T. Sevilla. Dr. Sevilla specializes in pediatrics. She earned her degree in Medicine from the Manila Central University. She is affiliated with the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) and Makati Medical Society. MEDICard members may visit her for consultations, during Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 8 am-12pm at MEDICard Head Office Clinic, Makati. She also holds clinic at SM City North EDSA during Saturdays, 10am-2pm and on Sundays, 10am-3pm. The MEDICard Clinic-SM North EDSA is located at the 3/Level, Left Wing, Main Bldg. SM City North, Quezon City.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

YEAH! We love golf: PNB's Deogracias Jacinto, Nestor Pineda and Narciso Capito, with IISA's Jing Warren and PNB's Mike Sandig

JOVEN Reyes of RCBC Bankard with MasterCard's Judith Dayrit and Anton Corro

COOL bank executives: HSBC'S Peter Cruz, Equitable Card Network's Fol Rana and Harry Gue

Bankers hit the greens

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

HOTSHOT senior bank executives took a break from the asphalt jungle and chilled out by spending a whole morning in the sprawling greens of the world-class Sta. Elena Golf Club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The lucky ones won tons of prizes during the 2005 must-go to MasterCard Invitational Golf Tournament, *palanggas*.

One couldn't miss the pack from MasterCard welcoming the *tres* distinguished guests, like (a superb golfer himself) **Jose Rene Villa-Real**, vice president and country manager; woman of substance **Judith Dayrit**, vice president for member relations and marketing; southern boy **Anton Corro**, director for operations and member relations; and **Rochelle Leyba**, member relations representative.

Once the "hellos" and "how are you" were over, it was time to hit the ball, *palanggas*.

Rafael Simpao II of Security Bank, **Eddie Guba** of Bank of Philippine Islands, **Katz Cruz** of RCBC Bankard, and **Julius Villaruz** of Metrobank participated in the ceremonial tee off.

The competition was hot, each person showing off his best form and that *tres* important make or break perfect swing.

And the winners are: Class C champ, **Peter Yap** of Allied Bank; Class B, **Narciso Capito** of Philippine National Bank; and Class A, **Tony Robles** of Chinatrust. The man of the hour was **Louie Garcia** of RCBC Bankard, who bagged the overall MasterCard championship.

All these wow champs received a trophy and a Mont Blanc, courtesy of MasterCard, *natch*!

Special awardees were **Juanchit Jose** of Metrobank, for the longest drive at hole 12, and fantastic golfer Katz Cruz of RCBC Bankard, for "the Most Accurate Drive" and the "Ladies Special Recognition" award, *palanggas*.

Hey, did you know that the MasterCard award-winning Priceless advertising campaign is now seen in 96 countries giving the MasterCard brand a truly global reach? Grab a MasterCard quick, *palanggas*.

The real excitement began when at the end of the awarding, tons of prizes were raffled off. Loads of cool golfers did not go home empty-handed, *palanggas*.

Samsung month

It's been like a Samsung month. Samsung had an event almost every week, *palanggas*.

Moi made sure to be present when Samsung unveiled its biggest range of enhanced Silver Nano Health System home appliances, *palanggas*, at the gorgeous Harbor Garden Tent at the breezy Westin Philippine Plaza.

Seventy cool, eye-catching new models in four product categories were launched, from must-have washing machines, air-conditioners and refrigerators, to Samsung's newest baby, the first Silver Nano-equipped vacuum cleaners.

So what's Nano all about? I asked. "Nano technology effectively removes bacteria, viruses and fungi; penetrates and kills their cells; suppresses their ability to breed and, therefore, effectively inhibits the cell from growing," explained super talented Samsung corporate marketing head, **Angeline Limbaco.**

In his welcome address, the popular **Hyuck Jae Shim,** president and CEO of Samsung Philippines, said, "Samsung's Silver Nano Health System will speed up our goal to become the top premium brand in the digital appliances business."

Hey, check this out people. In a three-year R&D program costing an awesome over US$10 million, the sterilization and anti-bacteria properties of the new home appliances were tested and certified by laboratories in Korea and Japan to be among the best in the market today, *palanggas*.

This is a welcome development for all of us who dream of a healthier lifestyle, *n'est-ce pas* (as in, *di bala?*)?

Reception

Loads of action had been happening at the popular Dusit Hotel Nikko, *palanggas*, which hosted a fun, relaxed cocktail reception in honor of the Royal Thai Embassy. The occasion was meant to further strengthen the ties of the hotel with the chi-chi diplomatic community.

Heading the pack was none other than Her Excellency, **Asha Duitiyananda**, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Dusit's popular and *charmant* general manager, **Ikuo Itoi**, together with the hotel's dynamic rah-rah management team, welcomed the ambassador and members of the embassy's staff to the celebration of their strong bond of partnership and friendship.

The exquisite Drum and Bass function room was where the action took place. Showing Dusit Hotel Nikko's special brand of gracious hospitality, an endless buffet of excellently prepared cocktail tidbits, superbly prepared by the expert chefs of the hotel's renowned Asia specialty outlets like Thai's Benjarong, the Japanese Benkay and Fiesta San Miguel. The wide array of yummies included mini Turkey Tortilla Rolls with guacamole, Rosettes of Smoked Salmon on Eye Roast and Pad Thai Gung, Tord Man Gung, moist mini chocolate squares, and many more, *palanggas*.

Naturellement, the affair ended with a karaoke session where everyone tried to be an "American Idol" contestant, dahlings.

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS. MasterCard VP and country manager, Poch Villa-Real, with winners Peter Yap of Allied Bank, Louie Garcia of RCBC Bankard, Narciso Capito of PNB and Tony Robles of Chinatrust

THE MAIN man chills. Jose Rene "Poch" Villa-Real, vice president and country manager of MasterCard International

LET's play golf. Joven Reyes of RCBC Bankard

ALL set to make a hit: Ric Verde of Metrobank

EDDIE Guba and Jess Razon of BPI

JUN Estella of BDO, Dan Ibarra of Smart Communications and Junie Veloso of HSBC

SAMSUNG's bright minds: Jerry Cuary, Dong Ha Jang, Maribel Navarro, Hyuck Jae Shim, Yun Tae Kim and Joon Tai Kim

DUSIT'S Hisashi Azuma and Rhea Odchigue; Thai embassy's counselor for commercial affairs, Pansakdi Musiklad; and Dusit's Merlotte Mondelo

KHUN Nit Yingkayun, Dusit's Benjarong Restaurant manager; Monthira M., with her husband, Pansakdi Musiklad; and Duangkae Lavanamal

CORY Quirino, with Samsung Digital Video System product manager Enrique de Leon, checks out the fab Silver Wash.

BEAUTY queens at Samsung affair: Carla Gay Balingit, Karla Bautista, Ella Evangelista and Tamera Szijarto

SAMSUNG's Antonio Mauricio and Power Aire's Mario and Nancy Tan

SAMSUNG's Angeline Limbaco with Cheil Communications' Pen Roque

KHUN Pen Wongwai, with group captain Permkiat Lavanamal, Thai embassy's defense and air attaché; Dusit's general manager, Ikuo Itoi; and Thai Ambassador Asha Duitiyanada